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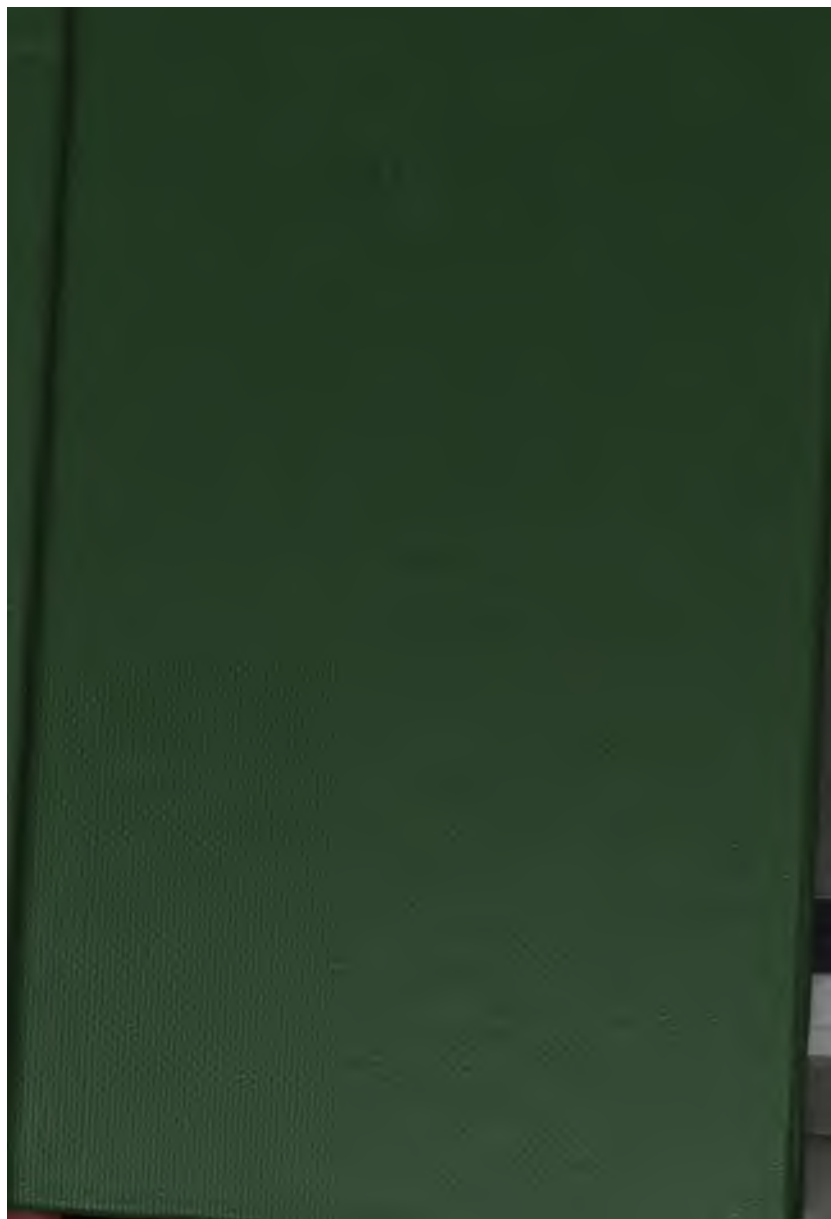
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THE CIRCLE OF THE YEAR

By W. MacTaggart, with all good





THE
CIRCLE OF THE YEAR

A Sonnet-Sequence

WITH

PROEM AND ENVOI

BY

ALEXANDER H. JAPP
LL.D., F.R.S.E.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

MDCCCXCIII.

*[These verses are printed simply with the view
of giving pleasure to friends; and no quo-
tation or public notice whatever is desired.]*

TO ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON,

POET LAUREATE.

OH, if a little leaf I might but lay
Before thy feet, and it kept greenness still,
And for a moment in thy wreath might play,
Ah, that were joy like triumph over ill;
For, in the shadow, it is sweet to learn
Some gleam of light received we may return.
June 4, 1892.

SO wrote I, whilst thy honoured head was still
Erect, full-thoughted, spite the slow decay
Of body; and all powers of mind had sway
To dower the world with music that shall fill
The ear and heart of far posterity.
And now, that thou hast past in light away
From our low world, and left a track of day—
Of gracious morning light—behind thee, I
Still dedicate unto thy memory, these,—
My faltering efforts after rest and joy—
The sweet delights that may sad hearts employ
To win a brightness and a saddened peace
From out the blank of sorrow,—still I lay
Low at thy feet my reverent wreath to-day.
Oct. 12, 1892.



PROEM.

I.—EXPLANATORY AND MORE.

IF aught of Sweetness or of Light be here,
Dear Friend of Friends, the joy I share with thee,
That ever joyed to bear the weight with me,
Alike in gloom or glow, dark day or clear.
O reader, if to thee this book appear
In little touched by Nature's mystery,
I would the worth should all accounted be
As something sent me from another sphere.
I know not how I writ : 'tis like a dream
Of lovely sounds that come and go and leave
A radiance round the thought to tint it new.
But shadows only will abide : they seem
Phantasmal, lifeless ; I would fain retrieve
A savour of the joys from which they grew.

II.—ALL ART BUT SUGGESTS.

FOR ah ! the world that we create but seems
A shadow fugitive in outward show ;
It still suggests a fairer sphere below—
That opens only to the soul in dreams.
We listen to the sound of tinkling streams
That down the hills in silver windings flow,
And summer birds that softly piping go,
And tawny ploughboys whistling by their teams.
A sense they stir of something wondrous fair—
Far fairer than the scenes on which we look :
That only symbol what the soul can see.
We try to phrase it ; but the essence rare
Eludes all words, and can in nowise brook
The touch that seeks to paint it perfectly.

III.—ILLUSTRATIVE.

LET painter paint the loveliest scene that lives,
The recreant canvas will not all unfold
What lies before him : sunset's scroll of gold ;
Dawn's roseate welcome : sunny air that gives
Delight to man and beasts ; the trees that sigh
And, bending, listen ; brooklets glancing bold
To flowers that tell Narcissus' story old ;
And stars that tremble thro' the pines on high.
The links he loses are as chinks whereby
We read the spirit of the man that worked ;
'Tis here the choicer souls see eye to eye.
The magic of the might that aye has lurked
In highest art is perfected in joy
Of something that doth secret ties employ.

IV.—THE REAL AND IDEAL.

THE Real and Ideal—do they meet
At some fixed point to make the art we love—
To give the warmth and light we most approve ;
That warms and lights like wine, mature and sweet ?
Ah, scarcely thus ; full hard it were to treat
The true creation that can melt and move
By meting-rod ; but this we know—to love
Deeply and tell the love is art's true feat.
The sober real is stuff for artist's powers,
And bathed in light of his own soul it shows
His genius greater as the common glows :
Illumed by sun o'er which no shadow lowers.
Rough Sancho Panza may be more ideal
Than Don Quixote with dreams that seem unreal.

V.—OUR SHAKESPEARE SHOWED IDEAL.

OUR Shakespeare showed ideal when he drew
The braggart Falstaff wrinkling o'er with mirth—
His paunch a-shaking, earthy of the earth ;
With tales of lustful love and pleasure new.
Twas easier far for him to bring to view
The faëry scenes of that Midsummer's-eve,
Or Tempest, with its Ariel—nymphs that leave
A sense of spirit interfused of dew.
And old Dan Chaucer oft was coarse, but true
To human nature in its fibre coarse :
He painted as he saw, gave each his due—
Made no saint better and no miller worse :
But both find balance in a loftier strain—
Griselda, Perdita, and that fair train.

VI.—HIS GREAT SOUL.

WHAT still we see and love is his great soul
Who saw and drew, and left his light to shine,
Transfiguring in a ray that seems divine—
Straight from the centre of this wondrous whole.
The world for him is beautiful : his goal
Is harmony and wholeness—if 'twere fine
As he can paint it, what within his line
That photograph could not as well unroll !
The mountain rock, all bare when seen in shade
Or cloud-obscured, looks hard and dull and cold ;
But when the sunsets play about its head,
Oh, then what worlds of wonder they unfold.
Genius is sunlight that creates the ray,
In which the shadows flit but flee away.

VII.—A DREAM TRANSPARENCY.

AH, soul is atmosphere as Turner knew,
The dead-inert is living in its gleam,
There is a wonder on the sluggish stream,
When dappled by the lights and sky so blue :
So he, with rapture, brings into our view
What aye we'd missed of lovely and serene
Amid the common where our lot had been,
And all comes out, clear, fair, and ever new.
Revealer rather than creator he
Who shows the whole of which each one is part,
And bears us to a realm, aerial, free ;
There is the object, then the light of heart
By which 'tis lit—a dream transparency :
We read two stories in each work of art.

VIII.—WE SHARE THE TRIUMPH.

GOD is the soul that gives to all its grace ;
Beheld in this there is no more unclean
Nor common : o'er the bleakest, dingiest scene
There comes a glory when it sees His face.
The artist sets all in its proper place
As seen of God, and when the kindly beam
Of genius strikes it, rosy kindling gleam
As of the morning leaves its heavenly trace.
Ah, then we look and gladden as in case
Of some discovery we ourselves had made :
Our powers are flattered by his grace displayed :
We share with him the triumph of the race :
We too create so far as we can see
What artist saw in vision clear and free.

IX.—ART MAY NOT PERFECT MEN.

MEN ne'er grew perfect thro' the power of art,
 Tho' art may perfect faculty and skill,
 To aid a union that can best fulfil
 The highest impulses of mind and heart.
 But when assuming that its ends impart
 The halo to all life, art serves but ill
 The ends it seeks, divorcing men from will
 To fashion plans that widen out life's chart.
 Art is but servant; Life itself a mean
 To mould a nobler destiny to be,
 Wherein the lowest shall be lord and free.
 To this all lofty art has faithful been,
 By framing natures that will always see
 Beyond the form to Beauty that shall be.

X.—A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

GREAT Dante moved through worlds of woe to see
 And show the glory of the saints above—
 His *one* saint crowned with beauty, born of love
 And wisdom, passing all that here may be.
 And Spenser dreamed in placid ecstasy,
 With heavenly Una for his queen, and strove
 On upward heights to lead the crowd to rove,
 And learn of goodness, beauty's mystery.
 And Shakespeare's calm and comprehensive eye
 Ranged wide, but one truth ever lightens thro'—
 What warning in the Queen's sleep-walking sigh
 And terror, as for pardon she did sue:
 He wished each man Horatio brave and high,
 And every woman Desdemona true.

*XI.—GOODNESS THE PRIMAL ELEMENT IN
TRAGIC ART.*

FOR these the rest exist : they are but foils
For goodness, else were drama all untrue,—
Without a motive, and the hidden clue
Of morals lost in wild fantastic toils.
Of genius all the lasting, richer spoils
Are these : true goodness gives the gracious cue
To purpose that no cavil can undo :
Nor lose itself in fancy's vagrant coils.
Right are the playwrights of the lower plane,
Who aye defeat the villain in the end—
A tribute to the instincts true, which lend
Their suffrage to the better part—not vain :
They only fail by means that are too weak
To justify the end they fain would seek.

XII.—AN HONOUR TO THE COMMON HEART.

ETERNAL honour to the common heart,
Rude, all untaught, but as the needle true
To pole, in yielding thus its tribute due
To moral grandeur in the crudest art.
With patient suffering it takes warmest part :
Expose the noble to its passioned view,
It quickly seizes on the rudest cue
And from full faith in this will not depart.
So sweet and hidden veins of poetry break,
As though from flinty rock, when strong appeal
Is made to those emotions that give seal
To what is widest, human, for whose sake
The common man above himself may rise
And tower a giant to glad grateful eyes.

XIII.—A SIMILITUDE.

AS when a child has left us for a space,
His voice familiar, fashioned to the ear
From alien sounds, makes all the house appear
To live and move with him, until his face
Peeps at us from all corners, and his place
Of power is felt in all our shadowed sphere,—
So poetry lives with presence soft and clear
In many a life that moves in daily race
With no confession of the yearning sweet ;
But oft as unseen waters, flowing fair,
Make green what else were but a sandy waste :
So in the daily mart, exchange, or street
The echo of a poet's song, so rare,
Crowns lowly life, as if by fortune graced.

XIV.—A SECOND SIMILITUDE.

A TINY curl, cap, knot, or little shoe,—
Fond relic of a life that did not last,
But quenched, blown out like taper in the blast,
Yet holds its place 'mid world of strange and new.—
For sudden brought before the wistful view,
Uprise the secret blisses of the past,
A glory o'er the leafless life is cast,
That all its inward beauty can renew.
Good women all are poets—artists true :
Around their symbol rises realms of truth,—
A world that to the heart is ever new,
Illumed by tears, and sanctified by ruth :
Death triumphs not o'er any human heart,
He elevates as by some touch of art.

XV.—ART DEFEATED AS AN END.

THERE are who fain would find in art their joy,
Secure from ruder lands of life, where rise
The fountains that send Beauty to the eyes
Of those who ne'er can special gift employ.
We see the child that, setting toy to toy,
Makes for himself a world of glad surprise :
'Tis fair for him : right fain would we devise
Sure plans to baffle aught that brings alloy.
Alas ! alas ! the child must forward move
From shape to shape to find that none may bide,
And trace the model of a realer realm.
And work of artist who would vainly chide
The life about him, charged with hate and love,
Is like child's palace years must overwhelm.

*XVI.—BLESSEDNESS OF CONSCIOUS LIFE-
COMPLETENESS.*

SWEET, sweet is life that feels itself complete,
Self-centred, yet responding to all claim
That comes in human nature's holy name,
And seeks no triumph, and has no defeat ;—
That needs no secret covert or retreat
To nurse its projects, or to dream of fame,
And, rising calm o'er mischance, is the same
If sun be shining, or the tempests beat.
The hero in the common ways, I hold,
Best source of inspiration for the song ;
If he exist not, mellowing the throng,
The singer's voice will soon sound prim and cold ;
Oh, here the secret of the lesson wise
That may be read in oft-dimmed wedded eyes.

*XVII.—THE ARTIST ONLY REPRESENTS OR
INTERPRETS.*

THE orator, when highest prize is won,
 Caught sympathetic stream of life thrown back
 From multitudes, to guide him on the track
 Where intellect and heart and soul are one.
 Such audience lacking, he must stand alone :
 Howe'er his mind may labour, he doth lack
 True progress, like some vessel that must tack
 And labour till another wind hath blown.
 The faithful artist thus must meet the life
 That beats about him, tho' with unfelt stroke ;
 The common breath re-breathed by him is song.
 And Beauty everywhere above the strife
 Stands fair, like statue o'er the market throng :
 'Tis his to clear it from the dust and smoke.

XVIII.—THE OLD CATHEDRAL.

A BEAUTEOUS symbol from the middle-age :
 The old Cathedral with its open door,
 Its welcome seats alike for rich and poor,
 Where all may rest 'mid daily pilgrimage ;
 And kneel, and muse, and in sweet mood engage
 In reverent prayer, while round is softened roar
 Of market-making, and the piled-up store
 Of needful wares, as buyers, sellers wage
 Their wordy combat, chattering ceaselessly.
 The organ-notes steal out on sunny air
 As doors swing open, and in order slow
 The acolytes with censers softly go
 Adown the aisles : an island calm and fair
 Of peace and rest set in a troubled sea.

XIX.—RELIGION, ART, AND COMMON LIFE.

LET fair religion and high art lie close
To common life—to common joy and woe :
The great heart of the world is just, and so
The product then will be no pictured shows,
In that fair middle-age, (despite its foes,) .
Round the Cathedral in full stream did flow
The social life—the citizens did go
To it, to speak of public joys and woes.
And these divorced, no unity can be
Of highest kind in Nature or in man ;
Our modern ways divide the life, nor can
Religion rouse its purest ecstasy.
Let fair religion and high art join hand
With generous life that beats throughout the land.

XX.—THE COMMON MEAN.

IN common joys our lasting pleasure lies :
If we will love what cannot pass nor fade :
The secret hidden not in light nor shade,
That will be with us spite of dimmed eyes,
Or age, or evil fate, when most we prize
Slips from us, then a rarer power is made
In weakness, and a blissful gift essayed,
By which a lovelier world may softly rise.
'Tis here, my Friend, we meet to master Fate,
In freedom of a life that knows no law,
Save what is sanctioned of the love to be.
I bring my gift, well knowing many a flaw
Will make it only more inviolate,
In linking closer all my life with thee.

SPRING.

I.

FIRST VIOLETS IN LONDON STREETS.

FIRST note of Nature's symphony most sweet !
 Surpassing far the fairness of the rose,
 That in the fulness of the summer glows,
Thou sheddest radiance o'er the dingy street !
From what still, shady, sheltering retreat
 By root of beech-tree which the squirrel knows,
 Or, nigh some lakelet where the moor-hen goes,
Darting, com'st thou our wakening hopes to greet ?
Sweet dreams brood o'er the heart of one that long
 Hath laboured in the hungry city pent :
 At sight of thee his thoughts to boyhood roam.
 Ah, fragrant memories blossom at the scent
So subtle, floating o'er the motley throng,
 And, haunting, lead the fancy far from home.

II.

LOVE'S YEAR.

LOVE'S year, my friend, is that of Nature too :
It dates from Spring, with open violet eyes,
And primrose hair, and many a soft surprise
Of wind-flower pale and hyacinth so blue.
And all the mystery and wonder new
Of budding hedgerows, and the answering cries
Of nesting birds, and clouds in highest skies,
And peeps of furthest heaven unveiled to view.
Then Summer follows, with his sunny glance,
And Autumn laden with his fruit ripe-red
Or yellow, and his heavy-footed tread ;
And Winter with his piercing icy lance :
But all in circle ceaseless following
They lead the way to one eternal Spring.

III.

AUTUMN BEARS WITNESS TO SPRING.

IN later Autumn when the winds are sweet,
And rains have fallen softly, there will rise,—
Like precious gems to unexpectant eyes,—
In sheltered hollow, and in dim retreat—
Pale primroses to tell us what is meet
To herald Winter ; and their chaste surprise
Is like a witness for the patient-wise
Thro' whom fair Spring is always at our feet.
From mossy nooks late violets send anew
Faint fragrance taking captive senses fine ;
And on laburnums too the gold will shine
As bright as when the winds of April blew.
Whoe'er has seen the sight will ne'er forget :
He may have looked on these thro' eyes dew-wet.

IV.

WINTER BEARS WITNESS TO SPRING.—I.

WHEN glistening snows lie white by hedgerow bare,
 And clothe the branches with their spectral shows,
 The sheltered spots in garden will disclose
 The spear-like points of jonquils seeking air.
 Look well, the mould is stirring everywhere
 With pulsing life : the crocus' greening sheath
 Holds promise of the flower, and from beneath
 Show, toothlike, lilies of the valley fair.
 The hazel catkins move to wintry wind,
 And mosses meek lift lowly heads for life :
 The willow with its buds is not behind,
 But boldly flowers with feathery flufflets rise :
 The wheat upon the upland shows full green,
 Preparing for the next year's harvest scene.

V.

WINTER BEARS WITNESS TO SPRING.—II.

ON fair Azaleas buds in Winter grow,—
 Chaste lily-blossoms packed in sheath complete,
 And on the twigs of chestnuts, fair and sweet,
 The buds are full for next year's blossom-show.
 Life, life, in secret triumph, stirs below,
 Preparing well for Summer's light and heat :
 The army of the flowers has no defeat,
 And only waits in ambush from the foe.
 So life is linked with life, no break between :
 Fair Spring is heralded in every change :
 The work of Winter silent, scarcely seen,
 Is all essential as the Summer's range.
 And thus glad Nature links the bleakest scene
 With fair, by touches subtle, secret, strange.

VI.

SPRING'S KINGDOM.

TH^O' face averted, Spring holds present place ;
Her word is heard thro' all the changing airs ;
Thro' wildest tempests, like the sound of prayers
Her call is felt ; with hints of tender grace.
All things wait for her in their onward race ;
They look for Spring thro' every change and turn :
When tempests beat and men for mildness yearn,
As Winter hoary lags his dreary pace.
Nature is with them : Spring stirs under all,
With pledges of green leaves and softer hues :
The army of flowers she leads along
Thro' all the dearth, with many a thrill and song
Men note not ; and the leaves that fall
To those that follow pay their welcome dues.

VII.

THE CHARM IS REAL.

ALL, all is touched with tender mystery ;
The shadows on the river flit and change
The birds begin with fuller flight to range,
And sing with joyful note, like souls set free
From earthly burden and calamity,
The winds are balmy : on the hills a strange
And dreamy murmur : softest interchange
Of sound and silence : airs of prophecy.
The woods are softly stirred, and answer back
In rhythmic pleadings, as of hearts new-moved
By spell of music on a darkened track
With charm unlooked for to recall the loved :
The charm is real, from soul that is, not seems :
The mighty mother stirring in her dreams.

VIII.

IGDRASIL-TREE.

WHAT symbol this of life, and love, and power—
Igdrasil-tree, roots deep in death secure,
And crown of life, eternal, stainless, pure—
A glowing fount of bliss from root to flower.
All, all is one by virtue of this dower—
The darkness and the light, the curse, the cure,
As men regard them, never-failing, sure,
Like rainbow, birth of wedded sun and shower.
So Beauty lives, all life its minister,
Whether men see or, darkling, dimly grope,
Like half-blind travellers on some rugged slope,
Who when they stumble deem they do but err.
Nature tells clear that what we Evil call
Is shadow cast by central Light of All.

IX.

THE ACCADIAN SACRED TREE.

EVEN in the ages far beyond the time
When Babylon and Asshur waxed and grew
To giant stature, and their gods did hew
Beast-bodied, and colossal, and sublime,
The Accads to this height of life did climb,
With hymns all penitence, and faith so true
In one divine above all gods they knew,
And poets in his honour rolled the rhyme
Of adoration. They forestalled the Greek
In sad Persephonè or Proserpine:
They had their sacred tree with roots laid deep
In death, and crowned with flowers as radiant sign
Of light, and life, and love—a power to keep
Sure help for all that help would humbly seek.

X.

MEN FASHION GODS.

MEN fashion gods to fill their hearts' desire :
They rise on steps of self to their divine :
There is no higher, tho' they oft refine,
Or seek to pass to Godhead thro' the fire.
Ah, tho' the hope of rising upward higher
Impels the spirit, it doth aye incline
Like flower into itself, and makes a shrine
Of its own vision. See yon fountain-spire
Gleam to its topmost, then fall back in shower
Of glimmering pearls into its heart below,
To rise again in ever-brightening dower
Of loveliness to heart and eye—with glow
Of heaven in its glimmer—such a power
Hath man himself as deity to show.

XI.

MANKIND ARE ALL OF ONE.

MANKIND are all of one : they fall, they rise :
They see divine in Nature's changing form,
In stars and flowers, in sunlight and in storm ;
And lightning brings the God full in their eyes.
The truth is hidden under many a guise
Of symbolism, perverted, multi-form,
Till, at the last, an agent to deform,
Vile superstition has them for its prize.
Aye, even until they give as sacrifice
Their dearest kin at call of some false god,
Or priest, say rather, clean in his own eyes :
The minister of craft, who lays his load
On others : oft the old outstrips the new ;
The good Oannes wore his mitre true.

XII.

NATURE THAT LEADS ARIGHT.

NATURE that leads aright in her first glow,
Falls victim to the inventive skill of man ;
And then one half of her is under ban :
A wrong she stern repays with many a blow
To heart and hope, till, as the years roll slow,
She masters man with terrors he has made ;
Her strong avengers lurking in the shade,
And filling all the dark with pain and woe.
What hope for man in his poor course below
When Nature, outraged, turns his bliss to bane ?
His only hope to turn him round again
To Nature as at first, and joyous go
In league with her, believing that the soul
Transforms her at its will that both be whole.

XIII.

O NATURE, WITH SPRING VOICE.

GREAT Nature ever makes her call anew
Thro' gentle lover of the woods and streams :
She lends a light to his most radiant dreams,
And opens up fair vistas to his view.
He will not restless seek for strange or new :
The old familiar places bring him gleams
Of satisfying peace, and blissful beams
Of joy and hope are with him ; and the blue
Of sky and violet marry in his mind :
The wave of trees and flowers in ceaseless motion
Makes chord with rhythmic rise and fall of ocean ;
And what he seeks he evermore doth find.
O Nature, with Spring voice, send call once more,
That I may hear and answer as of yore !

XIV.

THE CALL.

THRICE-welcome call ! my heart is open still ;
O Nature, gentle Spring stirs, trembling, there :
From my dark life fall off the leaves grown sere ;
Once more it knows the bounteous budding thrill.
The pulsing hope will all its own fulfil
Amid the woodlands ever fresh and dear,
Where shyest kindred bring their gentle cheer,
As sunlights chase the shadows o'er the hill.
And all the gracious movements of that joy
That floods the earth with choruses of song,
Led by the larks lost in the cloudless blue.
No tie can hinder, and no harsh employ
Can hold me from the feast ; for will is strong :
I go, O Nature, to rejoice with you.

XV.

EARTH AWAKENED.

OLD Earth awakened from her Winter sleep,
All softly puts her daintiest garments on ;
And binds around her, gracefully, a zone
Of tender green, with blue embroidered deep.
Over that budding sun-tipped hedgerow peep
Such vivid emerald, as ne'er glanced in stone,
Or in the crowns of mighty Cæsars shone ;
And violets stir in yonder wayside heap.
The firstling beauty of the wood is full
Of colours, varied softly in their hue ;
The rabbits frisk, and birds in chorus sing ;
The starling screams, and doves are light on wing.
The air is pure—most sweetly clear and cool,
And heaven seems opened thro' the distant blue.
[Good Words.]

XVI.

IN THE FIELDS.—I.

THRO' yonder field the ploughman drives his share;
The bold, pert crow close follows at his heel ;
And o'er the furrow, slowly-winding, steal
Thin waves of mist that waver into air.

The upland lea is dotted here and there
With sheep and lambs that, like to pearls, reveal
A glistening whiteness ; and the cattle kneel
In full contentment 'with the Spring's fresh fare.
A bluish tinge is on the fir-wood's edge,
That pleases, but a little tries the eye ;
The new-waked squirrel peeps, unmoved by fear ;
The crested wren is busy in the hedge ;
The blackbird runs, then, resting, whistles clear,
And the sweet lark goes carolling up the sky.

[*Good Words.*]

XVII.

IN THE FIELDS.—II.

SEE, forth from yonder rose-bowered village school
The children troop with many a merry peal,
And dwarf the shorter hour for mid-day meal,
Responding slowly to maternal rule.

They dance and group themselves in circle full,
Then join their hands, and loose, and sudden wheel;
Their movements all unconscious grace reveal,
Recalling dainty Watteau, fresh and cool.

The babe laid down upon the grass crows fain,
And, creeping on, would make to join the sport :
The meadow rings and now young voices sing.
How clear the notes ! they echo back again ;
Of joy and innocence the true report—
These voices are the voices of the Spring.

[*Good Words.*]

XVIII.

WHITE CLOUDS.

WHITE clouds pass swiftly o'er the airy blue,
The sunlight rests upon the waters fair,
And "heavenly azure," like an island there,
Might beckon wanderers like me and you.
Alas! such isles the fables old renew
Of fair Atlantis and the Golden Fleece;
We follow, but the dower of fuller peace
Fades from us as more hotly we pursue.
The eye to see, the soul to love is all
That still remains as good to man below:
We never reach the bliss we fain would know:
Our fevered strivings but repeat the Fall,
At which the noisier sceptics gibe and flout,
When of their exile none can be in doubt.

XIX.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

THE buoyant almond-blooms break forth again,
Pink frills around the darkened stems to throw,
And shake to sighs on western winds that go,
Like some soft under-song o'er hill and plain.
Primroses rise along each lonely lane,
The starry wonders of their eyes to show;
By yon woodside the gay Lent-lilies blow,
And wave their heads as to some mystic strain.
As rapt I look there darts a sudden pain
Across the heart, for thoughts of human woe
That finds no Spring in days so heavenly fair.
Alas! to some no promise comes again
Of Spring-like pomp of hope with radiant glow;
And all their days the grey of Winter wear.

XX.

OH, BLAME NOT AGE.

LIKE homing pigeons, all their thoughts fly back
 To earlier days,—a dreary gulf between,
 O'ercast of cloud that shuts out the serene
 Of star and moon ; yet, through the darkened track,
 As in some tunnel underground and black,
 The lights receding fast are brightlier seen.
 The Past, the Past, how perfect 'tis, I ween,
 When looked at through the drift and cloudy wrack
 Of weary years of loss and want and pain :
 When Hope fell sickened, and Fear held his seat,
 And Friendship failed and Love passed by like rain !
 All, all is bitter where once all was sweet.
 Oh, blame not age, if when the sun shines clear,
 It shrinks, to muse on past times with a tear.

XXI.

LOSE NOT HOPE.

OUR German Auerbach caught the truth indeed,
 When in his walk thro' pastures lush and green,
 With scattered flowers, he tells how he had seen,
 In looking back, across the traversed mead,
 Nought, nought but flowers, exulting as though freed
 From grassy grip, and made a garden scene ;
 While at his feet, and round him, nought but clean
 Sweet spread of grass, and scarce a floweret pied.
 So seems it to the eye that backward sweeps
 The travelled path of life—the flowers grow high ;
 While all around is dull before the eye
 That maybe, for the sudden contrast, weeps.
 But lose not hope : the spot that now seems bare
 As you retreat, will ere long grow as fair.

XXII.

OLD AGE IS WINTER.

OLD age is Winter, when the sun is low,
And coldly shines to cast its shadows long
And deep, and frosts are searching, keen, and strong,
And warmth is not within the tingling glow.
The shadows fall to eastward, where the bow
Of Morn is charged with radiance, hidden, fair,—
Auroras of the night still linger there,
Reflected o'er the path by which they go.
Thus back to Spring-time passes aged thought—
The end as the beginning, rosy-fair,
With hues of rest and joyful peace inwrought—
A golden waking in a golden air.
Ah, age is Winter, when the sun shines low,
But all the shadows point to Morning's glow.

XXIII.

THE HEATHER.*

WHO that has walked on Scottish hills, and seen
The heather in the later Autumn days
Its waving blossom and ripe seeds upraise
In slanting sun together, and between
The deepening tints of leaves with brighter sheen :
And hath not said : A symbol, worthy praise,
Of age whose vernal bloom not all decays
Even when the fruit is ripe, tho' frosts are keen
At early morn, and mists stretch o'er the hills,
And wind and creep and mingle with the sky :
Oh, age is fair as that is when the eye
Is soft and sweet as childhood, and the ills
Of life transformed to wisdom, root and flower
Yield bliss of sweet content for constant dower.

* See Appendix I.

XXIV.

AN ETERNAL SPRING.

HERE too men hold for an eternal Spring:
The darkest hour is that before the dawn;
And from the cloud, like sword from sheath with-
drawn,
Flash sunlights on us, with the bliss they bring,
And lightning on electric fiery wing,
Born of the darkness, subtly works its work:
In shades the loveliest of flowerets lurk,
And on the dying trees the ivies cling.
So, in the darkened winter of our life
Bloom flowers of hope and beauty never sere,
That only unto quickened eyes appear,
Yet root and spring and spread their tendrils rife.
That dawn will bring them into fuller view,
And other skies will dower them with sweet dew.

XXV.

THE DARKENING EVE.

THE darkening eve is dawn to other skies:
Our midnight, glory flushing into noon;
Their sun is brightest when our pale-faced moon
Walks cloudy pathways, with a mild surprise
Emerging as from shadow; and the cries
Of daytime silenced when we have the boon
Of music made from lowliest speech a-tune
To subtle, secret, wondrous harmonies.
All ends are but beginnings elsewhere:
There is no close, but only entrance new:
The dark on this, on other side is fair:
New dawns from darkness that all life renew:
Death is but birth in other realms more rare:
Glad welcomes wrapt in every sad adieu.

XXVI.

A REFLECTION.

AS men plant walnuts to the eastward view,
That blustering winds their blooming may retard,
And flowers be saved from visitation hard,
That later sunshine could not all renew,—
So fares it oft with those that, born to do
A mighty work, wait long for their reward :
Their sap thrown back by sternest Fate's award
To testify the right by which they grew.
At last comes fruit that all men see and bless—
A sweet surprise and gracious heritage—
The poet's dower, the guidance of the sage—
The vantage of a well-won hardiness :
I think of Winckelmann, Spinoza wise,
And Moses Dessau, with the patient eyes.

XXVII.

MOTHER NATURE.

NATURE, most benignant mother dear,
Thy wise economies enshrine such art
That surely inward beats a tender heart
To bind in one the distant and the near.
All time is taken witness to thy sphere
Of use and beauty, that have equal part
In all thy counsels, if we read the chart
With instincts childlike, free from guile or fear.
How well the chestnut bud was sheathed and sealed
With gum that melted when the sun looked on,
And forth came green, with food for tiny bird.
The sycamore sheds honey when 'tis stirred :
Drops downy shroud, with willow buds revealed :
And nesting warblers welcome prize have won.

XXVIII.

THE WISDOM OF THE BRUTES.—I.

THE wisdom of the brutes is surely sign
Of forward movement to a higher state :

I watch their ways at early morn and late,
And many tokens find I most benign.

I would not one of these fair hopes resign,
As gazing at the swallows when they mate,
Or, having early laid the clay, they wait
For sun to harden every layer fine.

And once, when nests in window corner reared
Were in a moment laid in ruin dire,
I saw the swallows dash in crevice cleared
As though in passion impotent, retire,
Return again ; and ere I walked away
The ridgy base was laid in shining clay.

XXIX.

THE WISDOM OF THE BRUTES.—II.

SUCH wisdom in their acts men rarely show
When ruin falls upon their projects fain—
When men betray, or friends bring shadowy pain
By change, ingratitude, or vengeful blow.

They fret and fume, and waste the chances ; slow
To gather in the fragments that remain—
To stoop and pick the broken threads again,
And conquer fate by gladly stooping low.

But you, O swallows, no repinings show,
And no surcease, but swift to work again,
Till fresh and fair arises your domain !
I would that in the evil days, with glow
Of pious fortitude, I may sustain
An equal courage under every blow.

XXX.

IMAGES OF SWEET ROMANCE.

A TINY tuft of fur that to the eye
Of one that knows the secret lore of brute
Tells eloquently that they are not mute,
Nor vacant of the impulse fair and high
That leads the hero for his kind to die.
The rabbit-doe has here from her own breast
Shorn softness for the lining of her nest,
And left her traces for the robber-spy.
Fit emblem of the human lot and chance!
The vantage given by innocence and love
To those that prey upon the bloom of each.
Ah me ! what images of sweet romance
Rise from the records of the field and grove.
To each sweet lesson would I upward reach.

XXXI.

APRIL.

STRONG heart of April, beating all in tune
With man's sweet hopes throughout the waking earth,
Enfolded in thy buds lie many a birth
To deepen all the gladness of sweet June.
What gush of music that shall charm the noon
When July's heat subdues the voiceful mirth,
Broods warm in yonder bush ? From South to North
Thy promise shall be flower-like perfect soon.
But, ah, beyond the Summer's light and heat,
Steals Autumn's shade, with poppies he doth wear,
Snatched from the corn, ripe for the mower's hand.
Winter I see doth close behind him stand
All white and spectral, icy hand in air,
To stay heart-pulses that too fervent beat.

XXXII.

E A S T E R .

FOR Easter and its holy offerings wait
The pale sweet tribute of the opening year :
The primrose and the pilewort still appear
To join with hyacinth and violet.
And children go by rustic path and gate,
And sing their simple ditties softly clear :
In shady places, sheltered, free from fear,
They search ; nor basket full their quest abate.
Oh, blessings of the season go with them—
A churl were he that would their right refuse :
Both wall and altar wait their offering.
The pastor grateful will allow their claim,
Sweet savour of the childlike work they choose,
In sanctifying thus the flowers of Spring.

XXXIII.

SWALLOWS.

O WINGED memories of the blissful days
When cares lay light as dew upon the leaves ;
Ye weave a magic round the cottage eaves,
With twitterings sweeter than the statelier lays
Of songsters that are rich in all men's praise.
I watch your gambols as I inly grieve
The fleeting hopes that surely pass and leave
A gloom upon the forward-faring ways.
Are ye not witnesses of constant good,
Returning faithful to the haunts of old,
To cherish what has blessed in days gone by ?
I set you fondly in the fancy's eye,
As type of temperance, and faith grown bold,
To meet all change with cheerful fortitude.

XXXIV.

THE FURZE.

AND what is sweeter when the Spring awakes
Than on the dry and sandy slopes to see
The whin hang out his yellow bravery
That in the face of Winter gaily shakes,
And from the early dews a sweetness takes
To mellow all the land, as blowing free
The snell nor'easter sweeps up from the sea,
And prickly hedgerow into greenery breaks.
Like humble hero in a trying place,
Shedding a light by patient service done,
E'en so the gorse displays its power in Spring.
Like some sweet soul unconscious of the grace
That silent welcome may to strangers bring,
Its glance is gladdening as the light of sun.

XXXV.

LATER GIFTS.

THE chestnut buds like arrow-tips of gold,
Or amber, set against the deep-blue sky,
Make answer softly to the seeking eye,
Like tones Angelico doth oft unfold.
With soft and graceful witchery untold,
The lilac hangs its purple witness nigh,
And bright laburnum breaks that, by-and-by,
Its flowers, like fire-flies, in its green will hold.
In Nature's bounty we may joyous trace
The sweet successions of fair form and hue :
The first but herald of a fuller grace,
That Beauty in the whole have perfect due.
See rising o'er yon wall, but partial screen,
The poplar shines a silvery mist of green.

XXXVI.

IN A WOOD IN MAY.

THE primrose lingers in the eye of May,
With faintest odour on the south-west wind,
And youthful honeysuckles, twining, bind,
To form their trumpets for the faëry lay.
The hyacinths spread carpets on the way
Of blue, like sky bedropt on earth, to find
A deeper tinting : surely he were blind
That were not glad on such a heavenly day.
We saunter on, deep drinking joyful rest,
With all of heaven repictured on the earth,
Its blue and gold to wed the green—rebirth
Of beauty—thus by nearness, doubly blest.
In sweet content 'tis ours to wander by,
And win "the Harvest of a Quiet Eye."

XXXVII.

IN A PINE WOOD IN MAY.

ABOVE me fragrant pine-trees stir and sing,
As downward waver flecks of soft sunlight,
And scented breezes steal from yonder height,
Fulfilling all the wonder of the Spring.
Fay-folk from hid recess, their charms might bring
With no surprise, and every fabled sprite
Of woodwalk old emerge before the sight,
Nor mar the expectant air in everything.
By that strange law that links sad thoughts to sweet,
My fancy wanders to a flower-like face
That long has vanished, but is sweet to me :
For she had many a wile and fay-like feat,
As oft at evening she would grace my knee ;
Thro' her all childlike in my heart has place.
[Good Words.]

XXXVIII.

SPRING'S GIFTS.—I.*

THUS Spring hath daily gifts most choice and meet,

The smile of airy welcome on her face ;
Her flowers she plants in unexpected place,
And richly sheds her bounties at our feet.
But, ah ! that flickering smile is all too fleet,
And much she leaves unwritten of her grace ;
These crude, cold patches in the interspace
Are alien to her wooing touches sweet.

And were the Spring indeed more perfect—drest
In warmer colours and gradated hues,
What then were left for Summer's sun and glow ?
Of Autumn's red, and breezy blue, what use ?
Each season hath his own peculiar show,
And each atones the failures of the rest.

[*Gentleman's Mag.*]

XXXIX.

SPRING'S GIFTS.—II.

THE seasons' interchange of glow and gloom

Is marked in calendar of hopes and fears.
Forever follow on the smiles the tears,
And tears again for smiles make ampler room.
And in between lies reaping—if no doom
Of Fate doth follow, with its dim arrears
Of waste and barrenness : the branch that rears
Its snowy blossoms, with their faint perfume,
Droops with its fruited weight, and then is bare.
The reaper reaps the rustling cornfields ere
The golden harvest safely home is borne :
The withered leaves, like shattered hopes, lie low
Before the Spring comes, with his greening glow :
And dark and starlight herald in the morn.

* See Appendix II.

XL.

SPRING'S GIFTS.—III.

THUS too in life: Man's spirit, ever prone
To wander from the present, seeks elate
On tiptoe for the still more perfect state,
And vantage-point would make of royal throne.
In nothing is perfection: all doth own
The "little rift" that, widening, soon or late
Will make the beauty that we contemplate
But dust and ashes. Thus new seeds are sown:
And these the seeds of Charity's fair Spring,
And seeds of Summer's warmth and golden glow,
And Autumn's fruited wealth of calm and peace;
And those the seeds of Winter's ivy show,
And icy winds' destructive chastening,
That each from each may draw most fond release.
[*Gentleman's Mag.*]

SUMMER.



XLI.

SUMMER'S ADVENT.—I.

NOW Summer comes laughing along the lands,
With a garland of roses round her brow,
And she shakes the gold o'er the grassy knowe,
And the wall-flowers flame at the touch of her hands.
There is light and odour where'er she stands;
Her soft breath is tinting the harebells now,
With a blue that might symbol love's sweet vow,
And it sows white stars on the alien sands.
At the touch of her skirts with a thrill arise
The ox-eye daisies, and foxgloves tall,
That bend and sway with a softer surprise;
And the pimpernels that open their eyes
To the sun alone; and the finches call
To their mates as the sweet May-blossoms fall.
[*Good Words.*]

XLII.

SUMMER'S ADVENT.—II.

FROM her fragrant red-lipped mouth there blow
Sweet airs that wander by stream and lea,
That kiss the flowers and embrace the tree,
With a rapture that all the world may know.
At her bidding brighter, with deepening glow,
Flit the butterfly and the banded bee,
And the dove and redbreast are fair to see,
And the lizards and beetles come out for show.
In their bronze and gold and green of the sea,
They bask in the heat of the sun's full glow;
And after the dusk fairy-moths fly free,
Like jewels of night as they silent go;
Their wings a glory that few may see,
Save those that would Nature's secrets know.

XLIII.

A SUMMER DAWN.

A SPELL is on the air, the earth, the sky!
What wonder in the early gracious days
They said a spirit held it, and in lays
Of matchless beauty sang the mystery.
Before the sun hath shown his golden eye,
He sends his messengers in trembling rays,
That call the birds to early hymns of praise,
And shyest kin to wander fearless by.
And when, with full-faced glory o'er the earth
The Lord of Day hath cast his kindling looks,
And high mid-heaven is lit, a glorious birth
Of beauty breaks on heights, and trees, and brooks.
Fair dawn in mystic radiance wraps all life,
With Memnon note to reconcile all strife.

XLIV.

NO REST ON THIS LOWER SPHERE

NO rest, no rest on this our lower sphere :
All things move onward by a law divine :
The young broods fly ; the leaf is but a sign
Of what shall be when fruiting-time is here.
The waters roll ; the stars so crystal clear
On moonless nights yet intermittent shine ;
The sea is hungry for the land, and fine
The coral-builders high their bulwarks rear.
And islands rise to be submerged again :
And all rolls on, and Change is Lord and King ;
The soul alone, with load of joy and pain,
Abides and holds its own in ceaseless spring ;
Yet marches onward by a law divine,
Of which all noble is the deathless sign

XLV.

BUILDING UP.

THE coral-builders high their bulwarks rear
And as they pass, their very bodies make
Foundations for the later race, that take
Their places, raising, flower-like, pier on pier.
And each strange history is written clear
For those who, keenly science-eyed, can read :
A marvel of the natural world indeed :
And what an image of all life is here !
We too are building as we live to leave
Behind us records which may form a ground
Whereon most stable footing shall be found
For some who follow : well may we believe
That nought is lost : it only passes clear
Thro' never-ending changes, sphere on sphere.

XLVI.

PROUD MAN.

AND man, proud man, his fevered efforts go
To checkmate Nature in his love of fame—
To be remembered, he puts in his claim,
By ages yet to come, and fain would throw
His image 'twixt the earth and heaven, and so
Write out in capitals his worth and aim :
Alas ! his proudest trophies pass the same
As letters traced on sea-sand, where the flow
Of tides will follow : nought in Nature's line
But she absorbs again with no respect
Of human efforts : with a proud neglect
Of all distinctions overwrought and fine.
O brothers, would you build what lasts, lay down
Your aims at conquest, for the soul's pure crown.

XLVII.

PAN'S VICTORIES.

HOW men have striven in every age that's gone
To rear some symbol clear above all change ;
Came sweeping some high wave within the range,
And shook or shattered all the trophies won.
Great Egypt's pyramids they stand alone,
With ragged edge against the clear blue sky,
Where straight lines once were seen : the Sphinx's eye
Is dull and dust-blown : Memnon's head is prone.
Old Rhodes' colossus, how it tottered, shook,
When that swift earthquake laid the city low ;
The great God Pan, with goat-foot, gave a blow,
And laughed again at pride he could not brook.
If his delight is in the sylvan joy,
He aims at increase, when he can destroy.

XLVIII.
THE FATE OF LIFE.

AH, this the fate of life, that dashed in one
Are joy and sorrow, pastoral peace and woe,
And tragedy, from which for everflow
Fresh streams of life, and hopes that fain atone
For past distress : the fairest flowers, new-blown,
Draw perfume from decay, and, dead, they go
Decayward once again. The painful throe
Of death to mother brings new life to own
The mystery of life, and plain repeat
The tale of human change. To gain our end
Is often only to ensure defeat,
So close do joy and sorrow interblend.
All life is full of pitfalls : count him glad
Who walks serene, unmastered, courage-clad.

XLIX.
THE OTHER SIDE.

YET from the darkest cloud comes tenderest rain :
The tempest takes the poisons from the land ;
And when the sea roars on the rocky strand
It brings the healthful healing from the main.
And thunder, loved of gods and poets fain,
Is messenger of pureness and of peace :
The east wind slays the weak, but brings increase
Of strength to those that bear the great world's strain.
There is no evil but hath leaven of grace :
There is no good but complement of ill
Holds in its bosom : when the winds are still
And sun shines strong, corruption grows apace
And pestilence may follow : so the whole
Is bound together for a common goal.

L.

GREAT DEATH A WITNESS.

GREAT Death himself is but the herald hoar
Of life in fuller breathing, and of peace :
He gives good issue, and most sweet release
From burdens of the earth that waxed full sore :
He is no terror to the good, but more
A friend and helper, bringing fair surcease
From labour, pain, and sorrow, to increase
The powers of living, and the mind's full store.
He is the minister of love and rest :
Of equity he holds the scales serene :
On wounds and sores he pours his balms all blest :
He makes the poor ones as the King or Queen.
Why grieve that all must pass his tender hand,
Who crowns all with his tokens of command ?

LI.

SUMMER IN THE COUNTRY.—I.

THE blinding sun smites on the hot grey hill :
The streams are shrunken ; silence reigneth deep,
Unbroken save by distant plover's *wheep* ;
The grasshopper himself is faint and still.
The white stones in the brook tell why the mill
Is moveless ; all is sunk in soundest sleep.
Apart and scared the erewhile social sheep
Pant in their pastures, as though warned of ill.
The keeper goes his way on weary quest,
His dogs behind him lolling tongues athirst ;
At dusty roadside springs they lap, oppress ;
The birds retreat within their shaded nest ;
The goldcrest only breaks, with softer burst,
The drowsy silence of the midday rest.

LII.

SUMMER IN THE COUNTRY.—II.

SEE, in the west, a little grey cloud grows
To black, and sliding downward, winglike, spreads :
The sun is quenched, and yonder mountain heads
Fade out—deep shadows darkening o'er them close.
Sudden the thunder rolls, like shock of foes
In mighty onset, where artillery sheds
Red Death : then rain falls, spearlike, filling beds
Of streams, that never quicker swelled and rose.
The fir-wood looms a dark fringe on the slope :
Herds huddle under shelter of the trees,
And horses, frightened, gallop round their pale.
The patient sheep show more of prudent scope,
And cluster closer now on timid knees ;
Beyond, like dense dark cloud, the windmill sail.

LIII.

SUMMER IN THE COUNTRY.—III.

OFF roll the clouds : the sun comes forth again :
Refreshed the husbandmen return to toil :
Beneath the scythe the green grass falls a spoil,
And all things own the magic of the rain.
The magpie chatters, and the wren would strain
His tiny throat his bigger peers to foil
By overpowering : brooks shine ; bindweeds coil
Yet closer in the hedge : the thrush is fain
To flood the ways with music, and the lark
Soars singing ; while from grass and flower and tree
Are wafted odours more than incense sweet.
From far we hear the shepherd's collie bark
In bounding on his charges, and the bee
Softly in woodbine seeks a still retreat.

LIV.

SUMMER TWILIGHT.

ABOVE the spot where sank the radiant King,
One wavering strip of fire hangs like a crest ;
It pales, and Day dies out in yonder west,
And bats begin to sail on silent wing.
The banded night-moth goes a-journeying,
Like some knight-errant, singing on his quest
Thro' shaded woods ; and, by chance sounds distress,
The stock-doves in the fir stir, murmuring.
Great Nature sleeps not, never closes eye,
Hath thousand eyes of beauty in the night ;
I lonely sit 'mong hedgerow flowers and muse.
The soft white campion, waiting close a-nigh,
Upon the green opes out its flowers like light,
Its sweets to yield, and drink the evening dew.
[*Good Words.*]

LV.

SUMMER IN THE CITY.—I.

PENT in, pent in with walls of fiery brick :
The heart night swoons with languid weight of heat,
Within the brow a hundred pulses beat,
And all the being sinks inert and sick.
And ever with most wearisome stale trick
The blue-fly buzzes, and the dooming feat
The hand forgoes, tho' surely 'twill repeat
It's buzzing, with the vexing dash and tick.
The milkman's cry is faintly heard below—
The sounds seem muffled by the moveless air,—
And, heavy-footed, burdened porters go.
Far over yonder height the winking glow
Of the Church windows sheds a glory fair :
Ah, could the ear but list some cool brook's flow !

LVI.

SUMMER IN THE CITY.—II.

THE lark hung shaded in yon corner sends
A thrilling rapture that shoots pain athwart
The senses, with a sudden piercing smart ;
And rising higher, the keener pathos lends.
His note in graduated scale ascends,
And tells how, with the pulsings of his heart,
He has no whit forgot his ancient art,
Tho' now no upward flight the song attends.
His hot feet on the withering turf, that fills
His cage below, career with restless haste :
He bounds from side to side, and ever trills
His song made melancholy with the waste
Of action that should, circling, time the song
As up and up he would his flight prolong.

LVII.

PARABLE AND TRUTH.

AH, what of parable and truth is here ?
The lot of many in our modern days,
Who fain would rise, and sing their songs of praise,
But, struck by alien bars, retreat and fear,—
Who rise not upward with full note and clear,
But sit, in shadow, singing plaintive lays
That tell of shaded, narrowed, painful ways
Whereon their feet fare hotly, void of cheer.
Ah me ! the record of such souls in pain,
Like bird with breast that beats its prison-bars,
Who, wounded, mourn their self-inflicted scars,
Are wide writ in our annals,—not in vain !
I list their moanings, and I inly pine
To set them free into a realm divine.

LVIII.

MUSIC SWEET TO EARTH.

BUT oh! how much of music sweet to earth
Were silenced were their bars set open wide—
More joy, more thrilling rapture, swelling tide
Of golden harmony—but no re-birth
Of rarer numbers to make all men sigh
And weep mayhap for what will not abide :
Within the heart of woe new blisses hide :
A subtler joy no poet can put by.
The soul of song needs woe, needs panting pain
To give the deepest chord, yield tone to all :
There is no magic-music in the strain
That from dim deep to deep sends no far call ;
Were woes to cease and seek no utterance plain
Our nature then would face a sadder Fall.

LIX.

JUNE IN DRURY LANE.—I.

I WALKED one day, thro' all the sweltering heat
Of later June, in feverish Drury Lane :
The sun smote fiercely on the dusty pane,
And drowsy drudged the watchman on his beat.
Around was nothing that looked choice or neat :
The keepers of the dingy stores seemed fain
To doze, and dogs lay gasping in the chain,
When sudden broke on me a sight full sweet.
A stream of children, single file, came on,
Each holding in his hand the mimic wheel
That wind makes turn ; and tots of two came last :
In poor array, some shoeless, thin and wan,
But o'er their faces pleasant smiles did steal—
Such smiles as made me smile too as I passed.

[*Good Words.*]

LX.

JUNE IN DRURY LANE.—II.

FOR there I saw before me fair in act
A parable of loftiest ideal,

That, spite the grimmiest burden of the real,
Makes Poesy bloom from out the barren fact.

O little children ! by no conscious tact
Your pleasures with our blisses do ye seal,
Yet in simplicity, the law reveal

That makes true poems potent to attract.

Ye seek your joy, and smile as ye pass by
To see your mimic mills move round and round,
And dream not that ye make some cool wind stir.
Ye cheer the heart, and also please the eye ;
Ye make a spot of light on darkened ground :
And little more can genius minister.

[*Good Words.*]

LXI.

O SISTERS.

ON SEEING TWO SISTERS OF MERCY IN DRURY LANE AT
THIS TIME CARRYING THEIR STORES FOR THE SICK AND
NEEDY. [*Paradiso*, Canto xiv.]

O SISTERS in the love where all loves meet,
Ye are not far from that fair rose of bliss

Great Dante saw with his Saint Beatrice—
The Starry Cross, whose Light is music sweet.
Your Light is music as with tireless feet

In these dark tenements ye move, nor miss
The sense that in the world no joy like this
Can dower the heart, where all things fade and fleet.

O Starry Cross, whose Light is music sweet

Borne here on meekest bosoms to bestow
The largesse of the Lord, what word is meet
To honour such as do no praise entreat ?—

The Cross is their reward—a heaven below,
In hearts that carry grace where'er they go.

LXII.

O HOLY BROTHERHOOD.

I LOVE this brotherhood, who reverent go
Thro' life, with larger hope, to seek and heal,
Their garments smitten by the scorching seal
Of fire, by which they each the other know.
Where'er they are, their secret clear they show
To all they see who sympathy can feel;
And soul greets soul, with ardent soft appeal
Beyond all kindredship of flesh below.
Of this all earthly ties are but the sign—
The seed that may not ripen into fruit,
But here it blooms in lowliness benign,
And could they see it, would strike sceptics mute.
O holy brotherhood, made one to win
Beyond all creeds, the triumph over sin.

LXIII.

AS DID THOSE MEN OF OLD.

AND some that name not Christ, yet follow true,
As did those men of old His followers banned,
Because they joined not with them: Christ's right hand
Was up to shield them: "they that such things do
And not against are with us: of the few
Who show the Master's way, and take their stand
For that He witnesses"; while sea and land
Confirmed His promise for them, though they knew
Not word to call Him by or called Him wrong,
Oh, what false note is centered in the song
When men take sounds for things, and think they serve
With "Lord, Lord!" only, and forget the deed,
While some who scorn the name more seldom swerve
From such high acts as justify the creed.

LXIV.

ON READING A RECENT "LIFE OF
CHRIST."—I.

WHAT gracious Spirit this that walked serene
O'er lands Judean, dropping holy thought
And balms for wounded hearts, and when they brought
The sick He healed them, made the leper clean,
With pardon sweet; yet in the lonely scene
To the great Father closest access sought,
And in His prayer with earnest wrestlings wrought
Till bloody sweat fell from Him on the green.
O fair Gethsemane: the gateway clear
To Calvary with all its woes and pains:
We look upon Him, and He grows more dear,
The more we read and realise our gains;
If not the Son of God, He was indeed
The Son of Man for all of Adam's seed.

LXV.

ON READING A RECENT "LIFE OF
CHRIST."—II.

AND all who bring us nearer to the Lord
By study, sympathy, or clearer view:
His gracious features setting forth anew,
And clearing learned dust from His sweet word,
Claim all the gratitude true hearts afford,
And all the praise that is the prophet's due,
For aids in making us that path pursue
In which lies life, and all the true accord
Of heart with heart, and soul with soul, in joy
Of true communion, man with man at peace,
With all the blessedness of full release
From cankerous cares, while higher thoughts employ:
Thy labours aid us: we can feel how true
The record of that Life thou hold'st to view.

LXVI.

CONQUERORS CONQUERED.

GREAT Alexander o'er the world he knew
Led out his legions, conquering as he went,
Until his powers of conquest wholly spent,
He wept—no more remained for him to do.
And proud Napoleon, of the modern few
Who carved their way to empire, what event
Takes colour now from all he underwent
To crown himself with glory ever new?—
Their might has vanished like a random word :
They are but names, their influence is dead—
Like shadows gone that leave nor trace nor tread :
And he of Mecca less by use of sword :
His word was more. Wise Buddha knows no fall,
And Jesus' power and grace outlive them all.

LXVII.

IN THE FIELDS.

AH, beauteous is the bloom on ripening wheat :
Whoe'er has looked upon the rippling wave
Chasing the sunlight, as the west wind gave
Its benison, will hold no sight more sweet ;
Or apt to yield the pathos that is meet :
The rhythm that rounds the universal strain :
And in the mind so mingles joy and pain,
And yields the sense of harmony complete.
One is it with the wave of flowers and trees—
The choral dance of Nature Wordsworth read
In daffodils that gently waved their head
By that stream side, to that immortal breeze.
The music of the universe is heard
When hearts by sights like these are thus stirred.

LXVIII.
AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

(July 21-3, 1891.)

I.—A KING LONG DEAD.

A KING long dead here holds his court below;
Both sun and shadow serve within his sphere;
The clouds above, green grass, and dewy tear;
The waving trees, and winds that singing go:
The golden glory of the sunset low
Lights up his palaces: the river clear
Runs on and tells how oft he wandered here:
The chancel panes have still their mystic glow.
From lands remote his subjects come and go
With homage proud and meek that never dies,
But glories in the light of new surprise
As year by year the loyal offerings grow:
And pass not, for the King we honour here
Reigns over an eternal, changeless sphere.

[*Scotsman.*]

LXIX.

II.—YET MORE A SHADOW.

YET more a shadow he than that he wrought—
He lives in those his genius framed and set.
In lofty guise that men can ne'er forget;
With them high wisdom and beguilement brought.
Who has not solace in the dark hour sought
From noble Constance, with her dower of grief,—
From Desdemona and her joys too brief—
And Hamlet overborne by tragic thought,—
And fair Ophelia, with her love o'erwrought,
And piteous in the way that she did die;
And raving Lear that would the storm defy,
With Fool that fain his master help had brought,
And good Cordelia who the old man sought,
And watched until the storms had well passed by?

LXX.

III.—WHAT WARNING.

WHAT warning in the Queen's sleep-walking sigh,
And terror, as for pardon she did sue;
Or in Macbeth—the ghost of Banquo by,—
Who, fearful, would his bloody hand embue
Deeper in blood, his throne to fortify.
Or Richard that with rancour would pursue
Those that betwixt him and the crown did lie,
And fought with Richmond, and foiled passion knew
When on the field he raised that famous cry;
Or those who murdered Cæsar, to undo
Themselves in that ill-starred conspiracy,
And gained an end which mighty Rome should rue.
His light and shade he balanced with true sense
Of some divine, unfailing Providence.

LXXI.

IV.—MORE THAN MELCHIZEDEK.

MORE than Melchizedek indeed is he:
None came before, and none can him succeed:
The master of the secret thought and deed,
That shames and honours our humanity:
Reveals the wonders of all things that be
With reverence beyond the formal creed:
For each and all a fuller, fairer meed
Of love and wonder, hope and mystery.
What legacy for all men, rich and free;
The entrance to a land of beauty wide
Where real life and dream go side by side,
And all the common touched with majesty!
Our Shakespeare—*ours*—our humble pride to claim
Some shelter under that right royal name.
[Scotsman.]

LXXII.

PRESSED BLUEBELLS.

ON RECEIVING SOME BLUEBELLS, ETC., FROM THE CLIFFS
NEAR COWIE CHURCHYARD, STONEHAVEN, AUG. 10, 1891.

THE bluebells nod upon the banks we knew,
The lambkins nibble, and are not afraid ;
The gorse is golden where our steps we stayed
To gaze into the depths of sunny blue.
The sense of mystery in all things new—
Tho' oft regarded, never common made—
Remains to those who gladly will pursue
The track of reverent thought thro' sun and shade.
O Friend, tho' far, my heart did leap to see
These simple tokens from the land I love :
The bluebells kept the sign of signs for me
With wealth of memory other signs above.
What may free spirits win of great and free—
When these pressed bluebells so transported me?

LXXIII.

THE PINE WOOD IN AUGUST.

A SEA of fern, far-sweeping, wave on wave,
With rhythmic answer to the wind that steals
Thro' pillared stems, and yonder arch reveals
Blue glory islanded like faëry cave,—
Withdrawn from touch of all rude winds that rave
Round men's abodes ; blue-dim the light that seals
The sense of worship, making mild appeals
Like mellowed sunshine thro' cathedral nave,
When low the organ-notes swell out and die,
And rise again to flow in fuller strain.
The spirit of the woods is waiting there,
To wed the mystery of tears and pain
In human life, with solace soft and fair,
Still found in Nature's holy constancy.

[*Good Words.*]

LXXIV.

DARK YEW AND FIR.

IN A SURREY VILLAGE CHURCHYARD.

[IN MEMORIAM J. R. M., WHO DEPARTED NOV. 17, 1877.]

DARK yew and fir, with holly, interweave
 Thro' all the year, their shadows o'er his head :
 Fit curtain for a Nature-lover's bed,
 Whose joys were fresh with every morn and eve.
 I would not Nature over him should grieve
 Who still has part in all the glory shed
 O'er glowing scenes where most he loved to tread,
 And waits to waken where he ne'er took leave.
 The sweetest flowers lie on his breast alway
 For gentle witness of his perfect peace ;
 And these from far I lay in love to-day
 To mate with those as symbol of increase
 In all that Love and Friendship yearn to share
 Against the time when we shall join him there.

LXXV.

AT ABINGER.—I.

A T last Arcadia found for our reward !
 The village lies in swathes of sunshine sweet :
 Green grass is soothing for the weary feet,
 E'en tho' it be too luscious burial sward.
 To maiden modesty what fit award !
 The rose-trees year by year the tale repeat
 Of young life ended pure, without defeat
 Of hopes long cherished, or a heart grown hard.
 And there what uncouth forms the glad eyes greet ?
 Are these the Stocks that once for penal pains
 Familiar stood as warning to all swains
 Inclined too lightly others' rights to treat ?
 They moulder now in parody of time
 When this fair village *had* its petty crime.

LXXVI.

AT ABINGER.—II.

WHAT marks the Romans left upon the land !
Their walls and roads yet testify their skill—
Their power to shape, indomitable will,
That made them masters where they set their hand.
Their towers they built o'erlooking vale and strand,
Their camps they set on high commanding hill,
They drew their tribute from the running rill,
And earth and sea gave up at their command.
They made all Nature serve them—drew the ore
From deep dark mine, and shaped from it the share
As well as sword. They made the barren bear :
And lights of art to savage tribes they bore.
On graves of friends they planted rose-trees tall,
And left the fashion—sweetest mark of all !

LXXVII.

EMBLEMS THAT WILL LAST.

WOULD men leave emblems that will last and bear
Their spirit down to future times intact,
Then let them wed affection with the act :
The human soul will take their gift in care.
The Roman walls do moulder, dust in air,
Their trophies sink, and turned up by the share,
The rude swain wonders at the cubelets fair
He finds thick strewn upon the surface bare
In many colours ; for mosaics fine
They glimmered once in floor of room or hall,
While fountains sparkled, casting veil o'er all,
As haggard hero Romans would recline.
But what would touch the rude swain most to know
Is that they first on graves made roses blow.

LXXVIII.

A MYSTERY MADE CLEAR.

AH, here a mystery made clear as day :
Love only lasts, and Hate falls helpless down
Even in the moment when he gets the crown
Of his success, and all his powers have sway.
Or is it that our hate is but the play
Of love defeated, face-averted, fain
To justify itself in throes of pain,
At last to fall, exhausted, by the way ?
O brothers, what of life is charged with bliss ?
The loving moments when the soul took part
For others, with a godlike gracious art,
And knew on earth there was no gain like this.
In giving self we gain : when glad we share
With others what to keep had bred despair.

LXXIX.

WHICH IS MOST SWEET ?

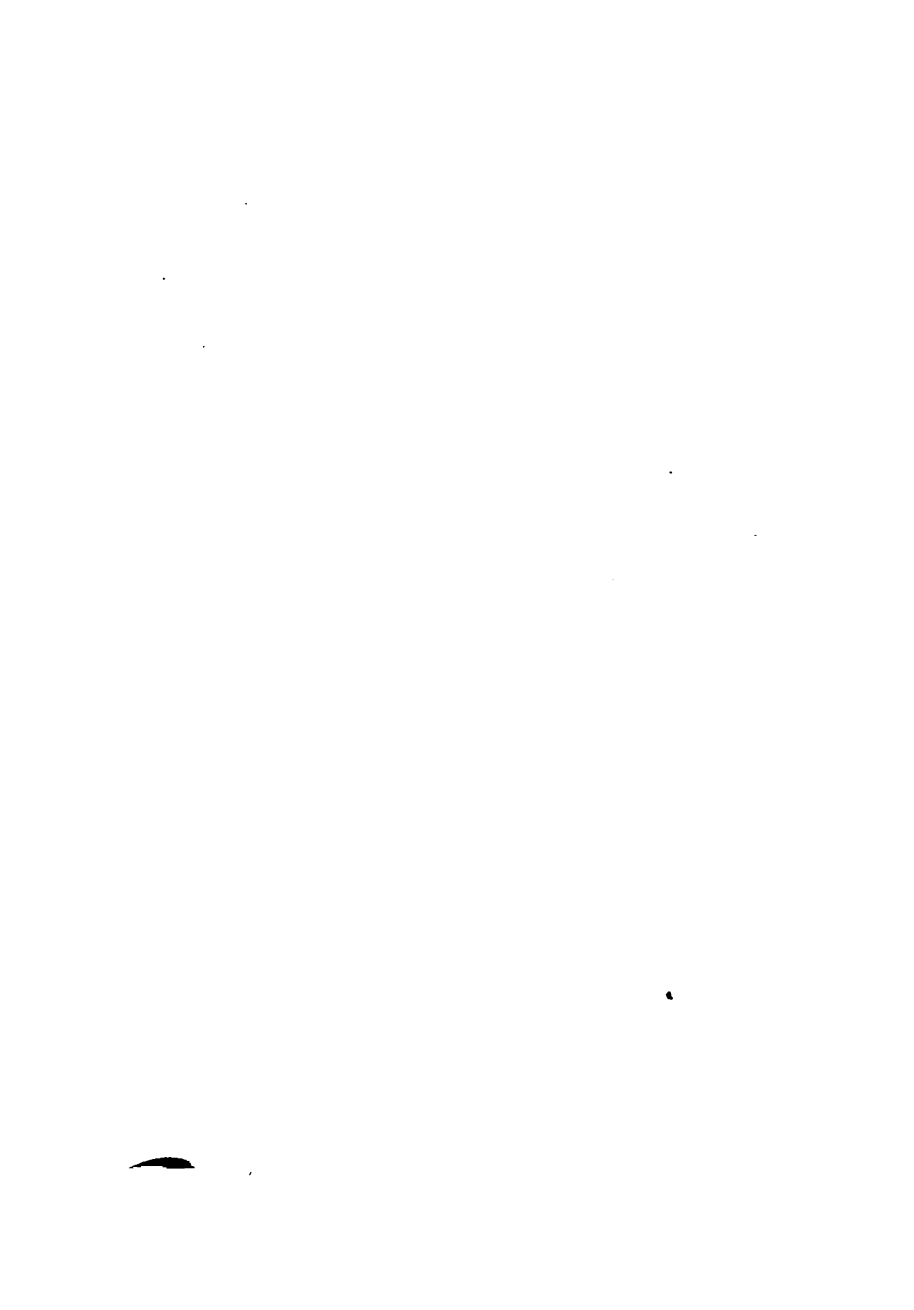
WHICH is most sweet—to see with open eyes,
In happy passive mood when all is still,
And Nature answers with the sacred thrill :
Or thro' another's soul to find our prize ?
'Twere hard to tell : our nature ever cries
For human help, and all our finest skill
Reaps but defeat, and scorn as 'twere of ill,
When we retreat to hug ourselves all-wise,
Or wait not for the kindling of the heart
At flames of other eyes, to guide and lift,
As 'twere by shining steps to draw the gift
Of insight down from spheres set high, apart.
To give is still to get—true joy to share
With others what to keep had bred despair.

LXXX.

NOTHING IS FOR SELF.

AH, nothing is for self in this our sphere,
Nor stands alone, but linked in chains of gold
Are each to each : there is no narrow fold
In which to fence ourselves from care or fear.
Great Nature speaks in accents bold and clear :
She tells that nought of highest worth is sold
Or bought, but every faithful tale is told
That every one beside may joyous hear :
And reap the harvest of the deep, if high,
The very harvest of the height, if low :
The sun is hottest in the vale below :
And faithful souls apart see eye to eye :
There is a link that binds the high and low :
Go find it, if you would the noblest know.

AUTUMN.



LXXXI.

WITNESS OF AUTUMN LEAVES.

THE Autumn leaves that now begin to fall,
Or glow in gold upon the topmost spray,
Are witnesses for this, and day by day
Will testify to earth, and meet her call
To feed the flowers of future springs, that all
May glory in the life that wakes with May,
When Morn goes furrowing with gold the way
For that kind sun whose rays do equal fall
On barren waste, and fruitful field and vale ;
On meadow lush, and on the river's flow ;
On stagnant pool, and on the weeds below ;
On hated plantain and on primrose pale :
December thus is near of kin with May,
And fruitfulness full brother to decay.

LXXXII.

AUTUMN IN THE WOODS.

THE memory of the Spring is like a dream
 Of some fair world that only poet knew.
 The mists rise upwards, marrying the blue
 Of nighest heaven to purpled hill and stream.
 O'er reddening hillside darts the sudden gleam
 Of arrowy lights that bring a brighter hue
 On dull grey trunks—all Summer to outdo ;
 Rich Nature thus her losses would redeem.
 The squirrel pauses o'er me, drops his prize,
 And slily screens himself on yonder bough ;
 The wood-doves flash across like living light.
 And lo ! the nimble deer afar describes
 By subtler sense my presence ; pauses now,
 His head held high—a joy to human sight !
 [*Good Words.*]

LXXXIII.

IN MEMORIAM. J.D.

(Sept. 11, 1877.)

GOOD friends remain ; but thou, ah ! thou art dead,
 My friend and more than brother, sagely-wise ;
 Such patience lay within thy quiet eyes
 That violence lived not near thee. Now my tread
 Must be more measured ; as a wife her head
 I mourn for thee. 'Mid vainly-urgent cries
 And changes of this world, I can despise
 Ambition's haste, by which a man is led
 From task to task, and Love falls faintly by,
 And Fever kills out Joy. I humbly wait,
 And muse upon the blessings of that state
 Where I shall join thee in the upper sky,
 Intent on duty till the time to come
 When thou, familiar there, shalt lead me home.
 [*Good Words.*]

LXXXIV.

OH, CHARM OF DISTANCE!

O H, charm of distance, wondrous ministry!
That melts all into unison and tone:
Sounds that are shrill or harsh when heard alone
Or nigher, blend in sweetest harmony
With others softer and more mild, and make
The hymn-tune of the world, that all may own
The magic music from the central throne,
That gives the Key to all, and owns no break.
The very light that, tremulous, travels far
From utmost bounds of space where many a star
Roll in their orbits, mellowed by the years,
Falls on us softly—music of the spheres.
Ah, fools we are shortsightedly to scan
The near and single, and impatient ban!

LXXXV.

MOUNT ATHOS BEARS WITNESS.

T HE giant form on Athos was not plain
To those too curious, impelled too near;
They earned the earlier curse on those who peer
In corners for the faults and cracks with pain.
Their senses dulled, too long upon the strain,
They oft returned with proud disgust and fear
Ill-veiled, to say 'twas fable, with the sneer
That suits the sceptics, who have sought in vain.
If, reverent, you observe not distance due
And fair proportion, you shall never see,
Or see but fragments, and your doom shall be
To doubt and question, and your clearest view
Shall lose the outline of the Whole and True,
And catch your own mind's mocking mimicry.

LXXXVI.

DARWIN'S COLOUR-BLINDNESS.

GREAT Darwin, he of all the modern school

Most amiable, friendly, tender, mild,

In spirit humble as a little child,

Fell blinded under this remorseless rule.

As eyesight sharpened, he grew more the fool

Of Nature, groping, molelike, in the wild

For something of the sunshine undefiled

Felt by all simple souls, not yet the tool

Of vaunting science in material kind.

He lost his love of poesy ; even awe

Was not upon him : as one colour-blind *

To all of beauty in the higher law.

The grandest far withdrew from his calm mind,

And left him slave of facts he halfway saw.

LXXXVII.

OH! IS IT THAT OUR FATE?

OH! is it that our fate is from behind?—

That hands unseen impel us or restrain ;

That hold us in the track despite the pain

Of efforts sore, nor aught the links unbind

Forged in the lives of those who halfway blind

Made Fate for us, and hold us with the chain

Of causal law, and no exceptions fain,

Nor power that can the fatal mesh unwind ?

Nay, nay, that is but fancy with a taint

Of the disease that paralyses will :

Our souls are free : it needs but little skill

In thought to mount to atmosphere of saint :

The flesh may sink beneath the fleshly strain :

The soul rise up in triumph and disdain.

* See Miss Power Cobbe's remarkable chapter in *The Scientific Spirit of the Age*, pp. 21 and 32, and Appendix III.

LXXXVIII.

AS DID THE MARTYRS.

AS did the martyrs of the olden time,
 The anchorites, the saints, the prophets true ;
 And we, like them, may rise to offerings new,
 With altar-flame of self to light sublime
 The way of others as they upward climb
 To heights whereon each hath his higher due :
 Ah, 'tis the joy seized only by the few
 When each might follow to the gracious prime.
 Fate is before : we each may rise above
 All we inherit, by the art of love :
 There is no doom for those who love the Light ;
 Nor any hindrance : nay, in high despite
 The ills are stairs whereby the true ones climb
 To regions clear, and starry, and sublime.

LXXXIX.

THE STERN-FACED DANTE.

"Se tu segui tua Stella,
 Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto."

Inferno, xv.

THE stern-faced Dante, pressed so hard of Fate,
 Went brooding o'er the ills he oft had borne,
 Till all the world was shadowed, dark, forlorn,
 And he in shadow walked disconsolate ;
 Yet in his heart one joy was consecrate :
 Full clear upon him as the light of morn
 Rose one fair star that chased away his scorn,
 With after-gleams that glorified his state.
 Through Hell he went to reach that star all clear,
 And climbed the heights of Purgatory steep,
 And tho', with Virgil, on from sphere to sphere,
 He saw what made him tremble now and weep :
 Yet his reward was his : nought could entice
 The lonely soul from light with Beatrice.

XC.

HOMEWARD-BOUND.

FAR o'er the sea there plays the morning sheen
As on, with tremulous throb, our convoy speeds
By storied places, redolent of deeds
That keep the names of many a hero green.
The shining shoulder of the Bass is seen
Thro' shimmering haze : above, a fading star, . . .
There Edin's couchant lion looms afar,—
Fit guardian for so old and fair a scene.
As on we rush fresh memories thickly rise :
The real and romantic melt in one :
It needs no poet, with a new surprise,
To breathe a glory round about the stone !
There ruins frown where once the chapel stood ;
There stands the lordly pile of Holyrood !

XCI.

THE BASS ROCK.

AND sacred thoughts the old rock well may rouse ;
St. Baldred there his pious task pursued,
And many a prayer sent up for others' good :
A glory shining on his saintly brows.
And thus was consecrate a sacred house
On that lone rock, and later martyrs stood
To witness for the truth with fortitude,
And utter faithfulness to holy vows.
Blackadder spoke brave words that touch and move
To this late day, and preached with rarer power
That chains were on him for inspiring dower :
And thus the Bass with holy troth and love
To latest age is clothed and crowned supreme :
More lovely than the poet's fairest dream.

XCII.

ON THE CALTON HILL AT SUNRISE.

THE city sleeps folded in morning light :

The opal mist creeps over yonder brow,
And Arthur's Seat looms out, a glory now,
Bejewelled with the flush of sunrise bright.

The spires are golden—all below is dight
In livery grey and green, and few to know
Or note the beauty of the roseate glow
That, crownlike, rests upon the castled height.

Edina ! fair as when the poet came

To sing thy glory, fresh from field and plough !

Nay, fairer, for new seal is on thy brow

Of genius marking out thy lines for fame :

Fair city, girdled with fair hills, and far

The silvery Firth reflects the morning star !

June 1, 1888.

XCIII.

HOME OF OLD.

FAIR home of old, dear hearts within thee dwell
That throb with joy to know that we are here;

All quick to bring the friendly welcoming cheer,
With all the magic of the ancient spell.

Aye, in some greeny corners sleeping well

Lie those that once shared equal laugh and tear;

They give sweet welcome too as we draw near,
And bless and fain would later secrets tell.

All round is writ the records of our joy :

By that path oft at sunrise went we glad

To lave in ocean waters, when no sad

Regrets, like shadows, fell with their alloy;

And yonder sped we oft, a happy band,

To see the moonlight brighten o'er the strand.

June 1, 1888.

XCIV.

AT HAWTHORNDEN.—I.

A PLACE of light and shadow, where the beam
Of softer sunlight falls through elm and pine
And birch and fir that break the harsher line
Of rocky walls fair mirrored in the stream :
A place in which a poet well might dream
His days away to music all divine
Of glowing metres, as his thoughts refine
To soft regrets that catch some after-gleam
Of future pain, as love and light may lapse :
So we two walked absorbed in solemn joy,
With no more shadow than the vague perhaps
That comes to add a strength, like some alloy ;
We basked in light and smiles, and then we went,
With sense of pictured peace in hearts content.

April 26, 1863.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

XCV.

AT HAWTHORNDEN.—II.

FROM Rosslyn's shrine to Nature's haunt of peace,—
Fair Hawthornden, whose lofty sides are clad
With leaves of every tint to make full glad
Both eye and heart, and where sweet songs ne'er cease,—
We came, with hearts calmed in the soft release
From worldly cares, and many memories sad
To find them deepened in that joy we had,
And could not share with her who is at peace.
The carven pillars, with their mystic lore,
Mingled in dreamy maze with trees and flow
Of streamlet dancing to the vales below :
The birds sang sweetly as in days of yore.
But one thing—one—was changed *in me* since then :
One cloud hung o'er the brightness of the glen.

June 1, 1888.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

XCVI.

AT HAWTHORNDEN.—III.

THE colours lapsed into a mist of green,
 And grey and blue, and vaguely forward came
 A face familiar, loved of old, the same
 Yet not the same as in that time—serene,
 Untroubled ; for the fateful might-have-been
 On every feature writ did lay some blame
 On Nature here that, buoyant, fed the flame
 Of others' joys, but made my loss more keen.
 Ah ! there we wandered once, and bright soft eyes
 Looked brighter that a smile from Nature fell
 Between us as to seal our covenant well :
 And every turning was a new surprise.
 Alas, alas, no new surprise for me
 That wait and dream of one I cannot see.

June 1, 1888.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

XCVII.

FEARS.

HOW many fears the heart of man may know
 That never close in fact, and many fears
 That, cloudlike, burst with issue of sad tears
 Have ending as with sudden shock or blow.
 Ah, then we would that we could forward go
 Bearing the burden that, indeed, appears,
 When lifted thus, the rainbow of the years
 That sealed the covenants of love below.
 No more, no more the sweetness of that care :
 No more the struggle, effort, nor concern ;
 By freedom from that care we later learn
 Some cares are flowers that it is sweet to wear.
 Their fragrant memory but remains to tell
 Where once they grew, and where they drooped and fell.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

XCVIII.

AND YET, AND YET.

AND yet, and yet they sow their seeds and rise
To life again, with other blooms and rare—

A precious heritage, most secret, fair ;
Full roses with no thorns, by other skies
Bedewed and freshened, with the mild surprise
And mystery of the stiller morning air
Of Paradise, and with diviner share
In hope of future bliss to waiting eyes.

A gracious charm, and mainstay of the soul,
They bring of patience and of quiet faith—

A stillness making all the spirit whole,
And throwing brightness o'er the veil of death.
We wait, we wait in peace, tho' tempest-tost,
Secure as sharers in Love's Pentecost.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

XCIX.

AH, FIRST WE SHRINK.

AH, first we shrink, and deem that, in our woe,
We walk alone, and, with our quivering smart,
We list the beatings of our own sad heart,
And, face averted, we pass onward slow.

Till at the last the inward flame burns low
And ashes lie around our path apart :

We turn, and fair behind us flowers upstart
Upon the way ; and others, gathering, go.

Then looking back we wonder, and are fain
To tread that road again, and hand in hand,
Lead on some innocent and happy band,
Dispensing words of counsel, not in vain.

And, lo, before us, beckoning forward, stand
Sad brothers, with the cypress in their hand.

HIGH WICKHAM, HASTINGS.

Sunday, Aug. 12, 1888.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

C.

UNDER THE CYPRESS.

AND as we move to join them, lo, we see
 The cypress wave, and under it the rose
 Blooms red and white, and round it radiant blows
 Starlike, the jasmine, in its purity.
 And then we see the fair benignity
 That mildly stamps their faces, mildly glows,
 As if calm hope was hid in their repose :
 And all their gestures tell of amity.
 Sweet brotherhood, made one by sorrow's seal—
 Elect for savour of the wide world's woe—
 For whom stars rise, and all fair flowerets blow—
 Themselves the flower of duty, strong to heal.
 Oh, sweet the bliss of union crowned by woe ;
 No more alone nor downcast can we go.

HIGH WICKHAM, HASTINGS.

Sunday, Aug. 12, 1888.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

CI.

TRUE SORROW'S MINISTRY.

THIS is indeed true Sorrow's ministry :
 The tree that stands alone to winter gale
 Well rooted, yet on one side oft may fail
 Of branch and leaf, unknowing of the free
 Harmonious roundness of the forest tree,
 That rises 'mid his fellows, fair and hale
 And true proportioned—to the winds a sail,
 Or harp that sounds the softer symphony.
 So, souls struck sharp by sorrow seek to stand
 Alone, and oft grow stunted, broken, bare
 To wind and hail, and losing all the bland
 Soft hues that might have decked them softly fair.
 Here too is strength in union—sweetness bred
 Of still communion and pure lowlihead.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

CII.

OH, BLISSFUL LAW.

OH, blissful law of life that sorrows fade
To dim regrets; and, as the marge of light
Wells round the orb eclipsed, our fuller sight
Of true and good awakes, as in some glade
At early morn, thro' tearful dews displayed,
Some common flower is crowned with new delight,
That garish sun had kept as in some blight
Of light's excess. And thus our souls are made
Fitter for moving calmly with the sense
Of sacred calling, and the trivial round,
Within which all our active life is bound,
Is fairer for our added reverence:
And thus we go in calmer mood to find
In common joys the medicine of the mind.
[*Victorian Mag.*]

CIII.

SORROW'S SICK EXCESS.

WHY is it that, when sorrow dims the eye,
And all the being is surcharged of woe,
The sunlight strikes as 'twere with piercing blow,
As tho' a doom were writ on summer sky;
The brightness adds a sharpness to the sigh
We heave beholding all the glorious show,
Or hang the head as on we tearful go,
And all the glory from the earth doth die?
This is the ill of sorrow's sick excess:
The surfeit of the egoistic will:
We fain would wrap us in our loneliness,
And make our bane the utter world fulfil:
'Tis well that light and flowers are at our feet
If down we look; for light and flowers are sweet.
[*Victorian Mag.*]

CIV.

THE DEAD WOULD LEAD US.

THE dead would lead us were our spirits whole,
And help to bring calm cheer and milder hope ;
A benison wherein lies fuller scope
In quiet faith—a largesse of the soul.
And all the bliss of softer self-control :
The key to which those hidden treasures ope :
Seen only by the widening eyes of hope,
As other lives are drawn within the goal.
Ah, then, the low lights brighten, touch the East
To ruddier glow : the shadows flee away :
We see the freshness as of dawning day,
And share again in brotherhood's full feast :
The tears that hid the beauty from our view
Give rainbow tints when we this part renew.

[*Victorian Mag.*]

CV.

OH, HELP OF NATURE.

OH, help of Nature as the shadows move,
And minutes marked by motion tell their tale,
As leaves wave out their music to the gale
And earth is answering to the heavens above.
All, all this interchange is marked of love :
Our griefs and passionings of no avail
To change the dial-shades that never fail
To register the good we fain would prove.
Sweet interludes of music come again,
Though storms have swept the woods and left them
bare :
Though none may hear the nightingale's sweet strain
It thrills all through the scented evening air :
Though we may droop and weep and sore complain
Floods, floods of joy to heaven are rising fair.

CVI.

OH, IF THE DEAD.

O H, if the dead—the sainted dead—still know

The daily scope of earth, and watch intent
The goings out and in of those who spent
Fair lives with them in helpful walk below,

Ah, surely to their holy hearts a blow
Comes with the troublous sighs of discontent ;
The copious tears, the ever-fresh lament,
As though the separation worked but woe.

Nay, if the songs of saints have any part
In music of the spheres, how should we joy
That we can any power or gift employ
In harmony with them, with loving art
To sing in unison, and so translate
To songs of gladness all the woes of Fate.

CVII.

A GREAT ECLIPSE.

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting
The soul that rises with us : our life's star
Hath had elsewhere its setting.”

O R can it be that, as our life has passed
Thro' birth—a great eclipse of all before—

Now dimly felt, like movement on a shore
Dark, waste, as wave on wave is slowly cast—

With nought but hollow echo from the vast,
And nothing clear amid the misty roar :

Death too is a forgetting, with no more
Of former life than sounds like April's blast.

So deemed the ancients of the future state—

A hollow, joyless, shadowy, darkened lot—

The brightness of the earthly hours forgot ;

Dull, weary, passive under doom of Fate.

Ah, better far to pass, and yield all hold

Than thus to grope 'mong shadows grey and cold.

CVIII.

EVOLUTION.

I.—GREAT NATURE RISES STEP BY STEP.

GREAT Nature rises step by step to more :
 Of lower forms makes stages to a higher—
 Rests not in any—and fulfils desire—
 Each change like to the opening of a door
 On wider prospect, till a boundless shore
 Stretches before man's intellect on fire
 To read Infinity, and list the quire
 Of furthest orbs, and learn the secret lore
 Of space all limitless, with unseen stars.
 Oh, life is radiant with the joy that draws
 A secret from the darkness, bursts the bars
 That hold the spirit under unknown laws.
 If doors thus open for the spirit here—
 What door must Death set open, free and clear

CIX.

EVOLUTION.

II.—WE ALL DIE DAILY.

WE all die daily : constant change o'ertakes
 The passing form, and sense within its range
 Pays ceaseless tribute : what is Death but Change
 From burden of the sense to soul that makes
One through all change, and ever upward takes
 The self to sunnier altitudes—not strange
 To him who knows sublimer interchange
 Of spirit with the spirits, for whose sakes
 He mounts above the passion-circled hour,
 Receiving ever-blessed Truth for dower,
 That gladdens life at centre, reconciles
 Slow-fleeting Time with far Eternity :
 The Now and Then to unity beguiles,
 And, like the Sun, holds all in harmony.

CX.

EVOLUTION.—III.

THE self that lives thro' mighty change on change—
That holds possession of each member here—
That seeks forever for a freer sphere—
Despising all within the sensuous range ;
And mounts on high imagination's wing,
In rapture traverses the depth and height,
That loves, aspires in loftiest despite
Of fleshly claims, that still their tribute bring :—
How can it pass when members fade away,—
The fleeting breath, the heart that beats no more ?
They cease, but open up a wider door
Of joy and hope and purpose, and a stay
Of calmer self-control—a life at peace
From all the ills of flesh in sweet release.

CXI.

NO NIGHT WITH NATURE.

GREAT Nature knows no night : on land or sea
She sets her beacons for her workers true,
That cease not all "the hours of darkness" thro'
To labour glorious in their pathways free.
Thro' deepest depths of ocean flash and flee—
Like living gems of ever-shifting hue
Of amber, purple, gold and green and blue—
Her servants, in their ceaseless ministry.
Like comets, showers of stars or suns, they show—
Shed streams of glory on their unseen track,
That light the waters till the waters glow,
And seem to give the wondrous radiance back :
The sea is mirror of the land where light
Of living lamps sheds beauty fair and bright.

CXII.

NOR DEATH WITH THE SOUL.

AND if no night in Nature : to the soul
Death is but change wherein nor pause nor sleep
Can break the rest of motion still and deep
That grows forever with the wondrous Whole.
Darkness but seems to eyes with narrow goal :
Night is but day to those that day can keep :
Day but a softer night to those that reap
The gifts of sunrise as they soft unroll :
And Death but larger Life—the night made clear
With glory shining in the centre-dark—
In furthest depths the seeing eye can mark
The magic sunlights treasured sphere on sphere :
There is no Death : in rising ranks sublime
All life mounts upward to a fairer clime.

CXIII.

AUTUMN IN PERTHSHIRE.

ALONE within the wood I sit and muse
Of vanished glories as more pensive scene
Unrolls before me : for the lovely green
Of sweetest May, comes dower of Autumn hues.
The scarlet rowan pays its cheerful dues
Of beauty, and the blue-green "Saugh" is seen,
With bright red flush of "blae-berry" between,
And mosses meek their olives interfuse.
The dying ferns are golden on the slope
And banded by the heather, here black-brown,
While there shine moister spots all softly green.
The blue mists hang upon the distant "hope":
Above, the summits sunkissed, like a crown ;
Below, dark firs that guard it for a screen.

CXIV.

NEAR CUILLALUIN, PERTHSHIRE.

PALE yellow livery of the birk-trees gay
Breaks brightly on the eye thro' leafless sprays,
And hangs a glory o'er the woodland ways—
Mute witness to the grandeurs of decay.
The hazel leaves are shrivelled ashen-grey ;
The winds the brown husks of the nuts upraise ;
They dully shine touched by the sun's last rays ;
And there a squirrel slyly works his way
From branch to branch, and, spite of tree-tops bare,
He balks the eye, and rests ere he has run
His twenty yards, in shelter hidden, fair.
The soft blue-black of pines is gathered there
Along the ridge that, stricken by the sun,
Gives flying gold, like gleams of angels' hair.

CXV.

AT HOME.—I.

I CLIMB the hill I knew well when a child ;
Afar the vistas open fold on fold :
On still green fields and gorsy commons old ;
And o'er yon rocky rampart grey and wild
There rests the sunshine sweet and undefiled.
The sweeping wood below me far outrolled
Is like a sea or roof of beaten gold—
Sun-smitten, Autumn's glory there up-piled.
The lake sleeps still, reflecting hue for hue
The fleecy clouds that, ever gliding, soar
And sky far-dappled by the breezy blue.
The scene is still the same as when of yore
I played with those who now are scattered wide—
And some have in the farthest Indies died.

CXVI.

AT HOME.—II.

BENEATH the honeysuckle's scented rings,
I sit as day dies out with tremulous sigh ;
The leaves stir softly as the birds flit by,
And lisp out dim and dreamy murmurings.
I muse, I dote on many vanished things,
That yet are present and can never die ;
Fair images that rise to fancy's eye
As all the course of boyhood clear upsprings.
Within this porch how oft I sat and saw
That figure dear approach with speaking eyes,
And then the words of counsel clear and free.
Once more I sit, and think with pious awe
Of her, and see, as then, the moon arise
Soft, silver-footed, on the azure sea.

CXVII.

AT HOME.—III.

WE men are but as leaves before the wind :
The generations follow on and go ;
Great Nature bides ; the mighty waters flow,
And tides keep time, the earth with heaven to bind.
The trees and flowers in season by their kind
Set forth fair symbols of a deeper show—
The passion, and the love, and fervid glow
Of hope, fulfilling what is but designed :
And thus we read in her a double life :
This sweet to eye, the senses making whole,
And that which speaks serenely of the soul,
That lives and works 'mid seeming-random strife :
The sights and sounds of Nature thus repeat
The past of heart that must responsive beat.

CXVIII.

AT THE GANNACHY BRIDGE.—I.*

ART'S powers vicarious to shape and give
To absent beauty living form and hue,
To recreate the common, making new,
And old set forth in choicest garb to live.
Of these I think as once again I look
On this fair scene that Chalmers limned so true,
Determined all that labour could to do
To paint the spirit of this nestling nook.
He strove with genius sensitive and keen—
With arduous patience, passion-kindled eye,
And all the senses stirred by mystery,
To render back the glories of this scene :
Clear waters, rocks, and nodding trees on high,
And bridge hung dizzy as 'twere clouds between.

CXIX.

AT THE GANNACHY BRIDGE.—II.

THE same the scene is still, but o'er it rests
Some halo borrowed from the painter's soul :
I read the parts in light of his sweet whole :
Accept the points of view his touch suggests,
Oh, rare the secret lodged in artists' breasts,
To make all Nature but a book of signs :
An alphabet that wondrously resigns
Itself to symbol what his soul attests.
If landscape tell no story of the soul—
Its ardours, loves and hopes, its fears and pains,
No hold on the observer it retains.
The Unity that makes one gracious whole
Is not in Nature, but in artist's heart :
We read two stories in each work of art.

* See Appendix IV.

CXX.

AT THE GANNACHY BRIDGE.—III.

O FRIEND, how faint, how broken, incomplete

Thy work was left : 'tis but a brief prelude
To what was purposed ; but a sample good
Of stores to come—a bud most fair and sweet

From tree that promised fruitage full and meet :

Thou gatheredst many a hint in happy mood,

With swift reaction when the canvas stood

In progress, in despair of crowning feat.

Alert in plan, in execution slow ;

Quick in invention, full of rare resource ;

And sense of colour keen as it was rare.

The secret of the Masters old to share

Was thy ambition ; and thou foundst a source

Of gladness in the constant strife to know.

CXXI.

PAINTING AND MUSIC.

[“If I lived here I would go to the picture-gallery every week ; for there are pictures in it at the sight of which I imagine I hear music.”—CHOPIN from Dresden.]

ALL thro' the beauteous universe so wide

Run chords of harmony beyond the sense,

Merging to meet emotion more intense,

With leadings from the moral self supplied.

Painting and music thus are close allied :

The soul, in rapture, counterchanging each,

The subtler sensibilities outreach

The symbol in one onward glowing tide.

As Chopin felt, so oft, my friend, didst thou :

Music with thee was more than ordered sound

About the senses in sweet magic wound :

'Twas colour, glow, and harmony of tone :

Thy pictures tell it : we may see it now

Where'er thy touch was noblest—most thine own.

CXXII.

"RUNNING WATER."

"Running Water" is perhaps Chalmers's finest landscape
—exhibited in London at the Guildhall 1892.

THE wonder of the water is the song

It sings forever moving on its way :

Now charm of dropping notelets in the play
Of sun and shadow ; now the chorus strong

As tumbling o'er the rocks it doth prolong

Its passion-sobs in eddies circling gay,

In fretted glory as the branches sway ;

And then with dreamy murmur sails along

To catch a beauty from an ampler day,

Broad-breasted under sun or milder moon.

In "Running Water" have we such a boon :

The artist worked in charmed ecstasy

Of ear and eye, and, as we look, we fain

Would catch the note that charmed in that sweet
strain.

CXXIII.

THE MONKS OF OLD.

THE monks of old they built and painted well

For love of God, and Time their servant stood ;

And touch by touch they made their service good,
With reverent joy no mortal tongue may tell.

So thou, my friend, worked under gladdening spell

Of Beauty, with her chosen sisterhood :

Faith, Hope, and Love that prompted to the mood
Of reverent joy in all the good that fell

To others, as thyself, in art's glad sphere :

Indifferent to the gains that most men chase.

How sweet the smile that lightened on thy face,

When some aspirant showed the touch full clear

Of genius : Time had thy glad servant stood,

For touch on touch thou mad'st thy service good.

CXXIV.

THE GRAVE OF SIR WILLIAM FETTES
DOUGLAS, P.R.S.A., AT ST. CYRUS, COAST
OF KINCARDINESHIRE.

WITHIN the sound of sea-waves he sleeps well :
Their ceaseless sobbings are his requiem there,
With sighs that sometime rise like stifled prayer,
And die away, like music in the shell.
The "benty" dunes do guard him 'mid the swell
Of ocean waters, and the salt sea-air
Blows fresh about him, and the changes fair
Of sunrise and of sunset, bring their spell.
Fit tomb for one who loved his art, and knew
To give the past its colour and its light ;
Who in the sea, and birth of heavenly blue,
And grassy earth took ever deep delight ;
And holds his place amid the honoured few
Who dower their fellows with new sense of sight.
[Scotsman.]

CXXV.

AT DUNNOTAR CASTLE.

THE high tide makes the rock an island true,
And restless surges beat about its base ;
And all things aid the wonder of the place
When moonlight casts its magic ever new.
As on the Bass, held under papist crew,
Its prisoners pined—to one appeal for grace,
They say that in the rocky springless place
Rose springs, the curse of jailor to undo.
And there e'en now the springlet dancing sings
In gloom, o'er rocky channel, on its way
Thro' thick-set wall. How blind to highest things
Are those who would for faith give such assay :
They wrong the soul who say that cheering springs
May rise not from the rocks for those who pray.

CXXVI.

ON THE NESS.

A LOVED resort when here a while I stayed,
And sometimes with me one so wise and sweet
That sage and child in him did seem to meet,
As o'er his talk still lights of humour played.
His witty anecdotes no gall betrayed,
As culled from far for purpose of defeat :
But like a message from some old retreat,
Where wealth was treasured for the joy it made.
And now, amid this scene in light or shade,
With wealth of water, woods, and hills so hoar,
To me another scene comes forth as fair :
Nigh London, in a room not wholly bare
Of comforts, sat we with one stricken sore :
And he the laws of charity obeyed.
[Inverness Courier.]

CXXVII.

THE CAVES OF STAFFA.*

G OD hath His temples by no human hand
Hewn in the ageless rocks : and there His voice
Is heard in tempest, as the rushing noise
Of many waters : there great columns stand—
In order, fluted, like the wave-worked sand
On Eastern shores, where strangest forms rejoice
In changeful hues of beauty. Ours no choice
But bend in worship, reverently, till land
And sea seem mingled in one element,
Inspiring rarer beatings of the heart.
Such art thou, Staffa ! where we look on Art
Forefelt in Nature, to fine issues lent.
Great awe creeps o'er us while we list the sway
Of ocean waters as they bar the way.
[Good Words.]

* See Appendix V.

CXXVIII.

IONA.—I.

AND what more potent than a good man's prayer?
Let science seek to conquer as it may,
Thou St. Columba here hast present sway,
And liv'st in ruins, aye, in light and air.
O'er yonder height there frowns a ruin bare
That by consent recalls thy saintly day,
Tho' well we know that such a stately stay
Was never honoured by thy pious care.
The Convent tells by what a long descent
Thy spirit framed itself a fitting shrine,
E'en tho' the Norsemen ravaged all the land.
And now upon this tongue of earth I stand
Where thou, at last, all earthly did'st resign,
And o'er thy monks in latest blessing bent.

CXXIX.

IONA.—II.

A CROSS long centuries we look and see
One point of light that time may not eclipse:
We hear to-day sweet murmurs from the lips
Of him who would by giving peace be free;
Who for his brethren toiled so mightily,
That pious fiction can no greater make,
Than simple truths that for a witness take
The hearts of men by seal of prophecy.
The noble life that bears the thoughts to God
Alone remains amid the wreck and change;
The rocks and seas have not so fixed abode
As memories of the Saints that forward range,
And from the Past take lights to point the way
Far in the future to that brighter day.

CXXX.

HARVEST.—I.

O'ER yonder slope the reaper's sickle plays,
And coldly bares the earth, field after field ;
Still on the higher reach, like some great shield,
One patch shines golden in the golden rays.
A gracious memory of childish days
Comes back, like flowers thro' hazy light revealed—
A memory that brings a chosen yield
Of faith and hope and gratitude and praise.
A mother's hand that long has lain in dust
Led me thro' fields like these, new-cut and bare,
And whispers come of reverence and trust
She taught me, as the leaves whirled thro' the air ;
I muse on harvest and on Autumn's gold,
And dream of resurrections new and old.
[*Good Words.*]

CXXXI.

HARVEST.—II.

AS thus I sit, the silenced quire of birds
That left the earlier harvest-field unsung
Breaks forth in richer tones than ever rung
Thro' hall or palace to gay festal words.
The soul of each sweet hope is in the chords
That linger on the ear, and all unstrung
The heart's quick pulses beat in fuller throng,
With subtler joy than Mendelssohn affords.
Ye prophet-warblers of a dying day,
Ye hail a Spring of hope as Autumn fails,
And bid the heart rejoice amid decay !
Along yon hill the sunset's fiery ray
Sets all on flame the ridge of fir that scales
The summit, and your song with it bears sway.
[*Good Words.*]

CXXXII.
SHADOWS.

WHO that in moonlight ever sat and traced,
Dreamful, the wavering shadows of the pine—
Ærial in their every curve and line—
As tho' by spirit hands dim interlaced,—
Can doubt of fairyland, where fitly placed
The mystic creatures of the fancy shine
In something of the golden air divine,
That poets with their airiest moods have graced.
The real and created worlds contest
The sense of truth within the brooding mind :
We might believe that dreams indeed were truth,
As there the shadows play with soft unrest :
Save for this sense, albeit all refined,
An end were made of poetry and youth.

CXXXIII.
AN OCTOBER MORNING.

BLACK rooks are scolding on the elm-tops green
That gently sway, tho' scarce a wind doth stir,
A blackbird sends his note from yonder fir,
And robins' breasts match well the haws they glean.
A wooddove passes near me with a sheen
Of silvery radiance, and a sudden whir
Of rapid wing : the gauzy gossamer
On dewy bush, shines fair. Above, serene
Clear depths of azure sky ; and far withdrawn
Grey shreds of cloud that linger on the verge
Of dim horizon, telling still of dawn,
Edged with a snowy whiteness like the surge
Of summer seas. The air is crisp with frost,
And larks and linnets pipe for Summer lost.
[*The Welcomes.*]

CXXXIV.

AN OCTOBER DAY.

SO still and fragrant—all the charms that lie
Behind us in the months concentrate here :
White clouds float, folded, in the blue so clear,
Like ghosts of clouds that nevermore would die.
Like dots behind the clouds the larks soar high :
Soft songs so springlike gently greet the ear :
The Autumn crocus rises chastely near,
And later daisy opes its dewy eye.
Oh, gentle Nature, what enchanting art
Thou hidest in the records of thy change :
Thou would'st not unto aliens be strange,
Nor act towards the worst a niggard part :
The glory reigns on earth and sea and air,
To veil decay in beauty soft and fair.

[*The Welcome.*]

CXXXV.

OCTOBER TROPHIES.

THE maple in her golden mantle clad
Stands radiant, and the bronze-leaved haw-
thorn waits
Like faithful servant at his master's gates,
While oaks in orange make the copses glad.
The lime-tree glimmers softly thro' the air ;
The bramble yet more constant than his mates
Stands green, like one that, working, aye awaits ;
The birch again shakes out her yellow hair.
The chestnut puts a lovelier livery on
Of softest fawn to testify his grace ;
And elms hold gold-green trophy in the face
Of heaven, as witness of the victory won :
The glory reigns on earth and sea and air,
To veil decay in beauty soft and fair.

CXXXVI.
IN SURREY.—I.

(IN MEMORIAM W. SMITH WILLIAMS.)

PIPE on, O thrush, upon the leafless bough ;
Thy liquid warble stirs the inmost core,
And adds new pathos to the Nevermore,
That makes the Then take tribute from the Now.
A piercing pain shoots sudden o'er the brow,
As once again I slowly journey o'er
An ancient pathway where, from out full store
Of gentle reasons, gracious to allow
For others' hopes, he oft would argue calm
Against the fatal meshes that were laid
For younger souls in "success deified" ;
And gross material argument's false balm,
As now by thousand facile pens essayed :
He triumphed, tho' by such he too was tried.

CXXXVII.
IN SURREY.—II.

AND leaves are shaken from our lives thro' loss
Of such as thee, that sweeter songs may rise ;
And clearer visions gleam before our eyes,—
Seen only o'er the shadow of a cross.
Here, here, is truth, howe'er the sceptics toss
Sharp satire at the miracles that lie
In record of the Christ : *We live to die,*
And die to live, by virtue of a cross.
Our leaves fall off—our hopes are crushed to earth,
But, with the leaves, seeds fall and do not die,
But rise again in full and fair re-birth,
At that sweet summons of a bluer sky :
'Tis thus we know the Autumn of the heart
When, shivering cold, as from ourselves we part.

CXXXVIII.

NO DESERT.—I.

"THERE is no desert in the land of life."
Well sung, O Poet, beautiful as true :
Yon sandy seaside wastes that rise to view
Serve ends that witness peace amid the strife ;
And growth where man expects not : rootlets rife
Of luscious sweetness gather there ; and new,
Season by season, flowerets fair as grew
In Eden's groves, uplift their leaves for life.
The field of circumstance that lies so bare
Before our view is such a stretch of waste,
With endless promise, if we try with care
To tend and trim it. Flowers as sweetly fair
As ever Gardens of the happy graced
Will grow to stature wonderful and rare.

CXXXIX.

NO DESERT.—II.

AND ever thus new orders come to birth,
With Beauty for their sponsor and their pride :
The barren and the fruitful close allied
By skill renew the Paradisal earth.
The Edens of men's dreams come slowly forth ;
Utopias fair, Hesperides spread wide,
And new creations nevermore denied
To blessings change that primal curse on earth.
And men, inspired by victory, go forth
Ambassadors for order and for Peace ;
Proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of Worth ;
And form new polities in which release
Is found from evils of the elder earth,
And for the Whole the bliss of vast increase.

CXL.

AT ROW.—I.

HOW sweetly fall the lights upon the lake !
The sun rains silver upon Roseneath old ;
And green yon hills, whose heads are wrapt in fold
Of fleeting mist, with here and there a break ;
And warm rays slanting on high pastures shake
Such gleams of glory as the genius bold
Of painter on his canvas ne'er has told,—
Essays it only for dear Beauty's sake.
Great Nature mocks us if the heart can take
No tribute of high memory to invest
Her beauty by the sense of love and good :
I think of one who here did offering make
Of life and love,—within whose gentle breast
Stirred hopes for all, that moved to highest mood.

CXLI.

AT ROW.—II.

J. MACLEOD CAMPBELL.

FOR this good work he met with scorn at first :
His Church expelled him : many friends grew cold :
The weaker men and bigots waxed more bold,
And storms of persecution on him burst.
But he walked on his quiet way, nor curst
His persecutors, nor his sufferings told :
On truth he knew he laid the firmer hold—
The more they raged the more for truth athirst.
And as the sun when sinking in the West
Illumes high East, more brightly than before
Returning still its milder benison,
So was his setting ; and he sank to rest
With light reflected from afar, with store
Of reverent thanks his faithful work had won.

CXLII.

THE HOP-PICKERS IN KENT.

A LONG the lanes the hedgerows stir with life :
High flowering hops are seen for many a mile :
On yonder slope they rise in rank and file,
While firs look down like giants freed from strife.
Along the lanes, too, many a man and wife
With trains of children, hardly free from guile,
Unkempt and ragged, with unchildlike smile,
Trudge under loads—even pot and pan and knife.
O contrast sad 'twixt sweetness of the land,
With glowing green to meet the heavenly blue
In 'ar horizon where the poplars stand,
And natures 'bruted 'mong the smoke and stew,
In worse than Egypt's bondage, where no hand
Comes forth to point the way to Canaan new.

CXLIII.

O WINDS.

O WINDS, touch tenderly the leaves that cling
But by a thread unto the parent-tree :
A breath of frost will softly set them free,
And earth will claim them for her ministering.
And oh fall gently, leaves that once did sing
For wealth of life and joyous greenery,
With no forecastings of the dark To-Be,
When Winter must eclipse the dowers of Spring !
O earth, thy bosom waits for many a gift,
Be gentle as to those whom Beauty led
From change to change, and day by day full fed
With silver lights of dew. Will thy veil lift
To show as radiant life restored and blessed ?
Ah then, ah then, no beauty shall be missed.

[*The Welcome.*]



CXLIV.

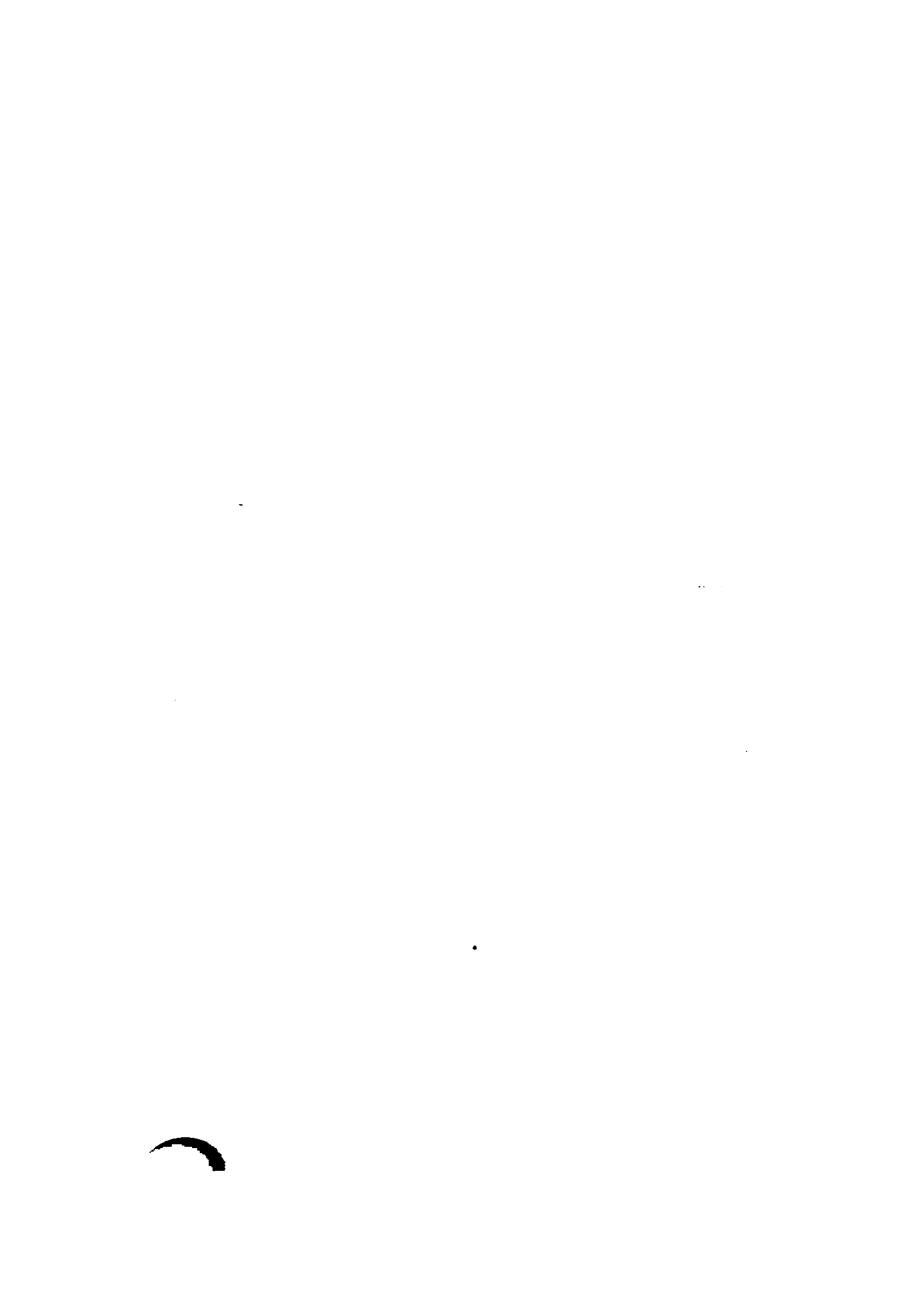
A HUMAN FLOWER.

[“At the funeral of a child of one of the hop-pickers at a village in Kent, one of the hop-pickers’ little girls, wandering among the graves, noticed one newly made and bare, and exclaiming, ‘This one has no flowers,’ went away, and presently returned with sprays of wild-flower, which she put upon it.”—*London Daily Paper*.]

AS oft in rocky cranny bare and wild,
A lovely flower, fulfilled of tender light,
Nods welcome sweet to climbers of the height,
With promise in its petals undefiled,
So, child, by thee our fancies are beguiled
To sweeter hope and promise rarely-bright :
We see thee here unfold such leaves of white
As angels looking on, with brows all mild,
Might gather, pressing them by Love’s own art
For record of fair earth. What soil hadst thou
To grow such roots, with flowers of love fair-
crowned ?
Thy action tells that God is no way bound
For gracious agents ; they are serving now
By deeds like thine to win the waiting heart.
[*The Welcome*.]



WINTER.



CXLV.

W I N T E R .

CHILL Winter sends his surly servants forth :
His word comes borne upon the circling wind,
As Autumn onward moves, but looks behind
And shudders at the cold hand of the North.
Behind her lies the wreck of Summer's worth :
No greeny leaf with labour will you find
Unless the laurel and his chosen kind,
That give the guise of permanence to earth.
And meet it is they symbol forth the Muse
That sheds a beauty even o'er decay ;
And all the Winter of our days makes green.
Thus Winter, in despite, doth pay his dues
To Beauty, that the poet may have sway
And find fair image of a hope serene.

CXLVI.

DECEMBER MORN IN THE COUNTRY.

THE Sabbath day of Nature ! Stillness reigns :
For snow has fallen, and all the land is white.

Yon cottage-roofs slant grey against the light,
And grey the sky, nor cloud nor blue obtains.

The sun is moonlike, as a maiden feigns

To veil her beauty, yet sends glances bright

That fill the eye, and make the heart delight,

Expectant of some wonder. Lengthened trains

Of birds wing high, and straight the smoke ascends.

All things are fairy-like : the trees empearled

With frosty gem-work, like to trees in dream.

Beneath the snow the buoyant cedar bends

And looks more ghostly ! 'Tis a wonder-world,

Wherein, indeed, things are not as they seem.

[*Gentleman's Mag.*]

CXLVII.

DECEMBER MORN IN LONDON.

THRO' yellow fog all things take spectral shapes :
Lamps dimly gleam, and thro' the window pane

The light is shed in short and broken lane ;

And " darkness visible " pants, yawns, and gapes.

From roofs the water drips, as from high capes,

Half-freezes as it falls. Like cries of pain

Fog-signals faintly heard, and then again

Grave warning words to one that rashly apes

The skater nearer. All is muffled fast

In clinging vaporous garments, nothing clear—

The world disguised in mumming masquerade.

O'er each a thick fantastic veil is cast

That grows more spectral as he comes anear :

And vaguely dark the tracks on which to tread.

[*Gentleman's Mag.*]

CXLVIII.

WINTER DAY ON THE THAMES EMBANKMENT.

ALL dull and cold ; and there the stream is crost
By envious mists, and ever upward go
The broken ice-crusts in procession slow,
And steaming boats are in short distance lost.
Low hung, like some great trophy, fair embossed,
The round red sun ; and clearer yet below,
Or wavering in the dull green tidal flow
In brighter segments, serpent-like, and tost.
The roofs across melt into sober grey
Of sky, while, nearer, snow-roofed barges lie :
Glad sounds ring clear along the frozen street,
For boys slide watchful on yon white sideway.
Poor, half-clad creatures glance and huddle by :
And fain would find some unforbid retreat.
Dec. 24, 1878 ; 2 o'clock.

CXLIX.

WINTER MORN IN A SCOTTISH VALLEY.

NE’ER from an artist’s hand a fairer show :
The hills, new clad, rise to the snow-white sky,
And meet it, merging softly, while the eye
Seeks vainly for the line thro’ cloud of snow.
Frost, the magician, marching to and fro,
Silvers all things that, dreaming-silent, lie
In shapes of wonder as he passes by,
To take the glory in brief midday glow.
A windless calm, and not a living thing
Stirs round me, save a solitary bird
That hovers high in air as in surprise.
Intent I bend my ear, and faintly heard
The cry of wild-duck in the distance dies,
And then the crispy, snowy whispering.

CL.

CURLING.—I.

BUT see, adown yon hill-side cautious tread
Across the silent snow a line of men,
Like blackened pigmies in the whitened glen;
And, hark! we hear that jocund words are said.
They speak of "skips" and "tees" and "shots" quite
dead

Of former days; and now to lake they hie
To meet their fellows whom we can espy
Trooping from other points to Wanlockhead.
And soon the "roaring" game is in full play:
The stones birr down the crystal ice, and, led
By skilful "skips," they slide so soft ahead
Close by the "tee," full cheered upon their way;
Till some skilled "shot," with "cannons," thro'
them breaks
And takes the "tee," which greater cheering makes.

CLI.

CURLING.—II.

ALL classes join—dissenters now forget
Wherein they differ from their churchmen friends:
The squire beside the ploughman laughing bends:
For curling breaks the bonds of "party" set.
Gamekeepers, poachers fraternise and smile
On one another; and the pastor wends
His way to see, if not to share with friends,
The glory of the play, and thus beguile
In healthful sport the hours, and gather strength
For days of anxious study and of thought.
So unto all a kindly sense is brought
Of gleesome life and union, till at length
The day declines; and then they needs must part,
But each with kindlier feelings in his heart.

CLII.

ON THE ICE.—I.

A SCENE of beauty and of motion free,
As choicely ordered as tho' Masters there
Gave ceremonies their peculiar care;
With added savour of most childlike glee.
No break nor any sudden pause I see;
Yet fullest sense of rest like picture fair;
I fix my eye, and then become aware
That childish forms pass light and gracefully.
Hand joined in hand they glide with movement sure,
And seen in profile look one figure fair—
A sight a very cynic must admire;
While they, unconscious that they form so rare
A picture, sweep and wheel and turn secure—
A motion-poetry that could never tire.*

CLIII.

ON THE ICE.—II.

I N yonder corner, younger ones have found
A fitting play-place, sliding all a-row :
Down, down in cluster, one by one, they go,
And up again, with shouts, for further round.
Their breath goes, steamlike, in the air; the sound
Of voices travels clear o'er ice and snow :
Their merry faces redden with the glow :
It is indeed fair childhood's pleasure-ground.
Winter, said Thoreau, brings us health and clears
The poisons from the earth that men may live
Secure thro' days and nights of scorching heat.
And he that loves not Winter—shrinking fears
To front the frosty air—no lover meet
Of Nature can be, howsoe'er he strive.

* Dancing has been called the poetry of motion : skating, especially by children, has surely as good a claim to the title.

CLIV.

CHURCH DECORATION.—I.

FOR what has Nature in her rule benign
Left gracious witness of her wealth and power
In laurel, holly, ivy, with their dower
Of beauty, that in teeth of Winter shine?—
And sometimes, too, in sheltered places fine
Grow simple daisies, glistening as in shower
Of pearls, and grasses rising as in mimic tower,
And prickly gorse that shows its yellow sign?
All, all are consecrate for uses high,—
That when the Holy Christmas-time comes near,
They well may symbol that far sweeter cheer
On wall and altar; making glad the eye,
And glad the soul; for here are tokens true
That God in Nature has His witness due.

CLV.

CHURCH DECORATION.—II.

AND blest the hands that careful seek and find,
And make all fair within the Church's bound,
That beauty's signs may stir to sacred sound
Of organ notes, like some inspiring wind.
Ah, here great Nature weds the human mind,
With gracious blessings on the hidden store
Of which these are the prophecies and more,
Which whoso seeks assuredly shall find.
The cross, the cross; it blossoms, breaks to flower—
Gives forth aromas of the day and night:
No storm can shake it, and no frosty blight
Fall on it, with its ever-blessed dower
Of truth and beauty, thus all consecrate
By hearts and hands that pious work and wait.

CLVI.
CHRISTMAS.—I.

DEAR friend, once more is gracious Christmas here,
With jocund looks, and in his snowy hair
Red berries waving in the wintry air ;
And for the young he has his jovial cheer :
But others love in quiet mood to hear
His secret whispers of the sweeter fare
He brings of spiritual, mystic, rare,
For souls that work and wait from year to year
For that full increase of the heavenly store
Our Master promised in the aftertime,
When that His Spirit working clear, sublime,
Had opened wide to all the heavenly door,
With starry gleams from highest regions pure :
Oh, may we too of that have entrance sure.

CLVII.
CHRISTMAS.—II.

AND hark, the Church bells peal across the snow
And, over yonder, others answer clear,
In fainter notes and fainter to the ear
As wavering winds again are lulled and low.
What gentle thrills around the heartstrings go
To think that everywhere to Christians dear
These notes swell out with pledge of fairer cheer
Than all the riches of the world bestow.
The voice of peace, and holiness, and love—
The tender symbol of Salvation wrought—
The gentle nestlings of the Holy Dove
By all the wrestlings of our Saviour bought :
Peace, peace on earth, good will and joy to men !
Swell out, O bells, and tell it o'er again !

CLVIII.

WINTER'S MORAL INFLUENCE.

WHEN dark the sky, and all the land is white
At Christmas-tide, the happy time has come
For those apart once more to meet at home ;
And social ties all friends and ranks unite.
And Nature also does this good invite :
For inward felt is all the deeper glow
Of genial life that outwardly the show
Is stern and hard, and daytime like to night.
Ah, then around the board of rich and poor
Are gathered kindred of the blood or mind,
And all in blessed ways their earnest find
Of charity and grateful gifts full store
That wait on all in this sweet gracious time
As Herald, Witness of still more sublime.

CLIX.

KING FROST.

KING Frost has bound the earth in iron bands,
Like some harsh despot moulding to his will
All impulse, passion, joyful art and skill ;
And sweet tints vanish 'neath his tyrant hands.
Yet there one witness for great Nature stands—
The warder of her bounty, gracious still—
The prickly gorse along that ridge of hill
Sets out its lamps to light the darkened lands.
Along the wayside hedges and the range
Of commons where all else is dark and sere,
The yellow gorse-flowers shine serenely there,—
To tell that Nature's heart nought can estrange
From Beauty, like some friend that sure and dear
Amid adversity will show more fair.

CLX.

ON HEARING A LARK IN JANUARY.

THE snow in rings still sparkled on the field;
In rifts the dull grey sky had changed to blue;
The cold round sun came slowly struggling thro',
With yellow lustre, like great golden shield.
Up sprang a lark, blithe in the air to yield
His tribute; up and up he, circling, flew,
And poured his notes, as tho' they would renew
The promise of soft Summer soon revealed.
O bird of faith and meek content, I draw
A lesson from thy song so piercing sweet,
And would with thee rise to the blissful law.
Up would I spring in shining moments too,
And sing between the showers. Some lagging feet
With song may swifter move their work to do.
[Good Words.]

CLXI.

A THAW.

THE North for long had laid his icy hands
On all the streams and silvered o'er the lake,
Whereon till nightfall from the dull daybreak
The skaters glided in their ordered bands.
And now the soft South wind is on the lands:
The springs burst forth, and sudden heaving shake
Thick ice in fragments, and the rivers take
Revenge upon their erewhile tyrant strands.
The waters now are masters, and they sweep
In swift procession, gathering as they go,
Like some mad people, freed from tyrant's rule,
Who drink the wine of new-found freedom deep,
And unto wiser heads would deal a blow,
And call him who would shield the old a fool.

ENVOI.

I.—TO A. N.

THO' oft dissuaded from the bold emprise
That now I close, and half restrain a sigh,
Fain would I find fair record in thine eye,
If here and there to poetry I rise.
For thou didst praise, yet counsel me full wise—
The sonnet's scanty bound would all defy
The purpose I had formed of old to try
By it to mirror Nature's varying guise.
I know thy heart is with the ballads old—
The ringing tumult of the life that fills
The records of the highland vales and hills :
The violent loves, and fights, and fierce surprise :
Yet know I well that Nature keeps her hold
By many a gentle token in thine eyes.

II.—IN MEMORIAM. E. F. J.

TO one old maxim I give honour due ;
What changes note I, as I now revise !—
A double task, tears rising to the eyes,
To think so much is dead that once I knew.
And unto her, who oft with me would view
The faëry field of poesy, but was wise
No lowly duty to forget, whose prize
Was newer token of the good and true,
My mind will turn, and to the last sad hours
She lay so patient, placid 'mid her pain,
Her pale thin features like to fading flowers :
Oh would even these dark hours could come again !
But yet they live, and it renews my powers
To feel that no good life is lived in vain.

III.—WHAT REMAINS?

AND what remains for him who wrote, and fain
 Had made his song full worthy of the past,
 And o'er the record hues of memory cast,
 That so the gracious love might live again?—
 Ah, this remains—to hold and hide the pain
 That pierces every day with fresher sting,
 Till all the glow of fancy fast takes wing,
 And in the mind there sounds but one refrain—
 “Lost, lost!” and but one solace can be won :—
 To lessen grief by voicing it, if so
 Once more the shades before the fancy run,
 And chequering lights across the darkness go.
 Enough! to capture peace by singing still,
 Tho' no man hears, or thinks it good or ill.

IV.—AH, NOT FOR HIM.

AH, not for him the much-sought-after prize;
 The praise, the sense that others mark, and fain
 Would treasure what he garnered 'mid the pain
 That leans to pleasure, and no love belies.
 He walked his way: and oft with downcast eyes
 Caught heaven's reflection thro' a tearful train—
 Clear, luminous, without a bar or stain
 Within the pool that on the roadway lies.
 To him it was not given to speak with power
 That rivets crowds or gains the great world's ear,
 Or art that makes the common grandly tower:
 Enough for him some far-off chords to hear—
 Translate them as was given to him to do;
 And find his record with the loving few.

V.—THE HEART IS COLD.

FOR now the heart of him that wrote is cold ;
Love, Loss, and Grief have met with their repose :

He high aspired, but never found the close
Of his long search, although the search was bold.
He sought and never found ; but halfway told
His story, mingled well of joys and woes ;
Was quick to feel—had friends as well as foes ;
And fretted at the chains that fast would hold.
He loved and lost, and mourned with tears and sighs ;
And saw life shadowed as 'twere with a pall :
Yet Hope was with him ; and he felt the ties
With Death, and Faith flashed fitful lights o'er all.
He failed, and yet had prizes : let them go :
Man's life is like the bubbles children blow.

VI.—SOME DEEPER CHORD.

AND yet, and yet, some deeper chord will rise
To tell how destiny may wed with will,
Or be o'erborne, and not alone of skill—
By powers unseen, like angels from the skies.
Downcast we go ; and when we lift our eyes
Behold ! a vision : from our world of ill
The veil is lifted : all is calm and still :
Heaven lies before us wrapt in sweet surprise.
Oh, happy they who enter, turn not back,
To seek from earth, or from the past their stay ;
Who follow angels in their golden track,
And every beckoning of their hand obey.
Heaven is for all who forward look and see
The past transfigured in the grand *To-Be*.

APPENDICES.

I.

"The flowers of the ling or heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) remain attached to the plant long after the seed is ripe; indeed it is not at all uncommon to find plants in full bloom with the withered flowers of the preceding year still adhering to the lower part of the leaves."—JOHN'S *Botany*, "Flowers of the Field."

II.

"The plain truth is that Nature is not harmonious at this season, but only in the way of becoming so. . . . A patch of green in this place and in that, quite crude as yet and utterly isolated; a constant contradiction between the sunshine and the wintry-looking woods; a few plants precociously early and nobler ones lagging behind."—HAMERTON'S *Sylvan Year*, p. 65.

III.

DARWIN'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"*Would any of us trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind?* . . . The doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value (*Life*, vol. i., p. 316). . . . If, for instance, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers (*Descent of Man*, vol. i., p. 73). . . . *Now*, the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions and feelings [wonder, admiration, reverence, and awe] to rise in my mind. It may be truly said that I am like a man who has become colour-blind."

IV.

These six sonnets, Nos. cxviii.—cxxxiii., commemorate the genius and unfortunate fate of the author's early school-fellow and friend, George Paul Chalmers, R.S.A., whose gifts as a painter were only beginning to be truly recognised when he was killed in Edinburgh, in 1878, in his 41st year.

His genius for colour both in portrait and landscape is admitted to have been remarkable: He was also a fine musician and passionately fond of classical music, and this taste was not without effect more or less subtle on his art. See his Memoir by Messrs. Gibson and White, and *Dictionary of National Biography*, *ad. loc.*

V.

"Staffa is undoubtedly the greatest natural curiosity in Europe, if not in the world."—DR. GARNETT.

"As I sat on one of the columns, the long swell raised the water at intervals to my feet, and then subsiding again, left me suspended high above it; while the silence of these movements, and the apparently undisturbed surface of the sea, caused the whole cave to feel like a ship heaving in a seaway. The ceiling is divided by a fissure, and varies in different places. Towards the outer part of the cave the ceiling is formed of the irregular rock; in the middle it is composed of the broken ends of columns, producing a geometrical and ornamental effect; and at the end a portion of each rock enters into its composition."—MACCULLOCH.

The inner sides of the cave are columnar throughout, the columns being broken and grouped in many different ways, thus catching a wondrous variety of direct and reflected tints, mixed with secondary shadows and deep, invisible recesses, producing an effect that is equally pleasing and picturesque and yet is awful. As the sea never ebbs out entirely, the only floor of the cave is the beautiful green water, reflecting those tints which vary and harmonise with the darker tones of the rocks.

OCCASIONAL VERSES

WITH SOME

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

BY

ALEXANDER H. JAPP
LL.D., F.R.S.E.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

MDCCCXCIII.

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I.

DRAMATIC PICTURES.

[In these "Dramatic Pictures" the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the writer. It may be added that Old Farmer Thomas was a real person, and the poem simply gathers up and imaginatively concentrates, if the expression may be allowed, the result of many long conversations. He died some time ago.]

I.

ALONE IN LONDON.

I.

O H, hard the streets, and the pitiless sky
Burns into my brain as I walk abroad ;
But harder still seems the stranger's eye
That I fancy notes but my awful load.

For a load I carry of want and pain :
And 'tis not the want of the bread alone,
But the ceaseless hunger that gnaws my brain,
And the longing to paint what my soul doth own ;

And draws me as moths in the night are drawn
To the flame that lights good men to bed ;
For my heart leaps up when I see the dawn
Rise over the housetops flaming red :

Or the sunset's glow on the westward, mark
The day's decline as I trudge along,
Weary and beaten, like dove from the ark,
With the rush in my ears of the awful throng.

Till I doubt if the sounds are real, or a sound
Within my brain to all music lost—
And I hear the same as from deeps profound
When I lie asleep, and am helpless tost

On a troubled sea of thought, and seem
To hear sad voices across the waste,
That call me to come, and I fitful dream
Of the old grey house, with its garden graced ;

And the fir-trees rising as screen behind,
And the mossy meadow before the door,
And the mallards sighing to the western wind
By the rillet that murmurs toward the moor.
And my mother—ah, but I see her plain,
As she moved at morn in her duteous ways,
To tend her pets, and to throw the grain
To the pigeons pouting and cooing her praise !
I could paint it all, weren't Fate so hard
As to throw me thus on a barren strand,
Where no *soul* is, or with none to regard
The pains I suffer at Hunger's hand.
Oh, that once again I could stand and look
On the little vale where I roamed of old—
Could cast my bait in the babbling brook
Where the minnows flash like flakes of gold.
But London drew me with power of dream,
Like magician set on his hill of old ;
And the oracle then did not doubtful seem,
Tho' I knew that its streets were not paved with
gold.
I had meant to study and patient wait
To perfect the talents in trust I hold :
Alas, alas ! for my poor estate,
I may perish of hunger and thirst and cold !
My genius saves me from coarser throes :
My soul doth lift me at times above
The body's wants, and on me bestows
The short-lived joys of the artist's love.
For oft as the gold of the sunset lies
In its quivering ripples upon the stream,
I gaze with all my soul in my eyes,
Till I lapse into painful vacant dream.

As I stand at eve on the bridge, and gaze
At the floating joy that the steamboats bear,
I could weep and moan but for crowded ways,
And for making the hard-nerved cockneys stare.
But at sunrise—then is my time of bliss,
When alone on the bridge I often stand,
And watch the firstling rays as they kiss
The water in many a rainbow band.
With a breaking heart and a hunger-pain
I could stand there and paint till down I fell :
Could I get but the paints, every nerve I'd strain
To prove that I loved fair Nature well.
And men too, tho' men showed me small grace
In my search for the daily bread denied :
How oft have I looked on a kindlier face
In hope, but to find all its looks belied.
For daily I wander from street to street,
With care look round for the house-painter's
sign—
'Tis my trade !—and I ask and even entreat
For work, but they all in their way decline.
Not even a word is sometimes deigned
In response to my calmly-restrained appeal :
They turn away with a scorn unfeigned—
'Tis well that the poor are but slow to feel.
But me ! why my soul is as flayed and bare ;
And I turn and sicken, and brood, and fain
Would weep for relief, like some woman fair
Deserted and lone, but 'twere all in vain.
Oh, God ! what is this that is born in me ?
The painter's soul—like a mummy bound—
Or a child in the womb that will ne'er light see,
But doomed to die ere the birth it found !

My last coin gone !—I must surely die
In the doom of a life all unfulfilled,
With the pang and the hunger, and stifled sigh—
Oh, God ! can it be that thus 'twas willed ?

II.

At last, at last, I have work : and I live
With the hope of a future : I paint, I see
My sunrise-scene grow grand : I give
Strong touches now with a kind of glee,
Like a boy, who finds he has powers above
What he dreamt before he had scope to use
The means ; and his face is illumed by love
Of a future sure to yield him his dues
Of grateful praise, and a generous meed
Of the harvest of fame that will render clear
The road to the starry heights where indeed
The artist walks from sphere to sphere.

III.

'Tis hung in honour upon the wall—
“On the line,” they say, where the light lies fair ;
To the unknown youth high favours fall,
For they rail it off as the crowds flock there
To see my soul that I painted so,
In the moments stolen from food and sleep :
The sunrise falls on the stream below,
And above on the bridge I stand and weep.
And here I lie, and will never see
The picture hung in its proper place :
Yet I die content—'tis enough for me
That men will allow me the artist's grace,

And remember of me that I toiled by day
At my menial task, and, when free, took share
With the great of old in art's glad play,
And painted my heart in my picture there.
So much to paint :—but the soul is seen
In an inch of canvas if men can read :
For the soul leaves its mark where'er 't has been,
And that men call me master is praise indeed.
I die content : but I fain would hope
That in heaven the artist his saint may limn ;
And talk with Raphael, and find new scope
In the smile of Angelico—rise with him
Full fit to stand by the angel-quire,
And join their songs, and paint them there,
Where the glory streams in a heavenly fire,
And praise for aye takes the place of prayer.
And with Rembrandt revel in light and shade,
Or with Ruysdael rove thro' the groves of pine,
And with Angelo speak of the glory he made
With his Night and Day on St. Mark's divine ;
And with Francia gaze, with a raptured eye,
On the angel-faces he made men love,
And hear him tell, with a joyous sigh,
How much he missed of what's seen above.
We might sketch the tree that for healing grew—
The Tree of Life in the midst of all,
In the light that forever streams anew
From the Face 'fore which they all down fall.
We might indeed ! For 'tis in that light
As cast from the face of our God below
That the artist works, and, in no despite,
Need we crave up there to be pleased so.

For perhaps the elders and saints may love
To look on the rapture that needs must glow
On the faces of those who in joy above
Would praise their Maker by painting so.

For we rise to the height of the true Divine
When we see, in the light that love makes flow,
The poorest scene, or the eyes that shine
O'er the wretched to lift them above their woe.

Ah, this were bliss,—to be one with those
I have revered here and have sought to hold
As my guiding-stars, amid all my woes :
Oh, I hope I may not be overbold.

I was one with them in my heart and soul
As I walked thro' the labour-darkened ways ;
And, tho' sad and hungry, I saw my goal—
With them to rise to a painter's praise.

Is it night or day ? for my eyes are dim,
Yet lights and stars float around me fair :
Saints beckon with haloes that overbrim—
My friends, it is over ; they draw me there.

II.

OLD FARMER THOMAS'S TALE.

[In this dialect the tendency is to turn "v's" into "w's," "i's" into "oi's," and so on, but I have not spelled so, save in most characteristic cases.]

OLD Naybour Pryde he 'ad died, an' th' funeral
was on th' way,
An' th' blacksmith walked along o' me, an' all at
once he say :
"You a'n't a-lookin' so well," he say, "you 'on't be
long on th' road,
A man as has turned th' Eighties should be lookin'
to change o' abode ;
An' t'other life 'twill be better far, an' easier, free
fro' pain,
An' there the loved uns o' youth an' proime," he say,
"as we'll meet again."

I a'n't o' them as 'en't 'ave nought o' other folks' jokes
an' fun ;
God bless ye, even at eighty-foive I a'n't a peaky one :
But Blacksmith he do 'ave a turn for talkin' an'
singin' o' 'ymns :
He play the organ o' Sundays, his old heid full o' 'is
whims,
Wi' a band o' youngsters round he, a-squallin' up
to the skies,
An' a-turnin' of their heads, like birds, an' showin'
the whites o' their eyes.

"I don't know nought o' the nex' life," I say to he as
we go;

"It may be jes' as ye fancy; it may turn out not so:
But I've done so well down 'ere," I say, "an' 'ere I
'ave all as I need—

A good glass o' ale to drink all toimes, an' a good
round o' beef for feed:

I a'n't no wish for to go, an' I a'n't wi'out work for
to do,

For th' young lot a'n't much good—allus on for
summat new."

Whoy, ye see that field afore ye, as has Mangold on
it now,

'Twarn't plowed aroightly for scores o' years, an'
farmers went for to sow

Good wheat—aye, the best o' Golden Drop—upon
it, and 'twar but waste,

An' the fellers war soon sold up, d'ye see? an' 'ere I
cum to be placed:

'Twarn't long till I saw all 'ow it was, an' plowed
roight for the Golden Drop:

An' in all th' Parish bounds, you bet, there never
was such a crop.

Young Tommy Jones he say to me, wi' a wink,
when I took the place,

As in throwing away o' sixpences I now could run
a race

Wi' enny naybour roun' about; but when I thrashed,
d'ye see?

An' showed my sample as 'ad such weight, I sorely
puzzled he

As I axed him if that 'ere now wasn't quite the
proper way

Of gatherin' back the sixpences as he said 'ad gone
astray.

I tellee as he looked as if he'd fairins * werry queer,
An' I laughed as if I'd split again, his hums an' haws
to hear.

Young Tommy war a feller as had more of a knack
to foind

His naybour's weakness than to use his cute and
active moind

For stiddy work an' munney's worth—an' so he
runned his race,

An' in Australiar now, I'm told, he kangaroos do chase.

He went out there, they tells me, in search o' the
wirgin soil

As can now no more be found at 'ome, an' allus for
to moil

Is the lot of all 'ere left behind, but I makes bold for
to say—

The man as is downroight worth his salt will allus
foind the way

To get good wirgin soil, and that wherever he may
stand—

And he'll foind it best, I tellee, jest in sich a feller's
land.

I a'n't no grumbler, an' niver was, tho' a trick or
two I 'ave played :

Whoy, even to this day they joke me foine about the
straw as I laid

On the barn-floor, 'neath the sheep, when that
Lunnon chap cum round ;

An' a good big proice I got, I tellee, for the sheep
looked big an' sound :

* Fairins = feelings.

I'm "nought but a broken-down farmer," I often say
wi' a laugh,
But I stood at old Pryde's gravesoide wi' nowther
lean nor staff.

An' who, arter all, could ha' thought it? He looked
so fresh an' so clean,
An' often at market he'd cum to I, and joke I about
a scene
As once took place at a 'lection, when p'r'aps I'd
drunk too deep
An' druv mysel 'ome in my dogcart with at least
one eye asleep—
To be told nex' mornin' as 'ow my dogcart was all
washed whoite—
A wonderful change to ha' come to't in the course
o' a single noight.

An' all as I 'ave I made myself—that gives it a
faster hold,
I began wi' nought, as a ploughboy, when on'y noine
year old:
Out in the fields at th' break o' day, in the fields at
the set o' sun,
But I was niver a chap to mope, an' I hates a peaky
one:
I loved a lass as was buxom an' broight, but she, loike
me, had nought—
Two poor fools oughn't be tied in one, at the last
I sat an' thought.

Poor Nelly, she warn't lucky—an' she went fro' bad
to worse;
She mated wi' a waggoner as war nought but a
walkin' curse:

He fell fro' off his waggon at the harvest, an' niver rose,
An' oft I sent her bits o' things, includin' bread and
clothes,

For the childer; but she ran away wi' a thatcher,
name of Stead,

As war more of a poacher than anything, an' oft
was lackin' bread.

She took to th' drink, an' evil ways of many another
sort;

Was put in gaol, an' 'ad 'er name at full in th' Police
report.

She even tried to make an end o' herself in the
Prison cell,

An' went as mad as mad can be, an' ne'er agin got
well:

Poor Nelly, she war pretty once, an' desarved a
better fate,

But still wi' such a one as that, it wouldna 'a' done
to mate.

I did all as I could for the childer to get 'em schooled
an' fed—

'Twarn't no good; the father's blood came out as
red as red:

They were pests to all as knew 'em, an' one as
hated Squoire

Was banished as 'twas proved he set the homestacks
all afoire.

I do believe in breed in man jes 'as much as in th'
beast;

You can't expec' as virtoo 'ud be so easily increased.

An' I? I made up to the widdier, as for a long spell
I 'ad served,

An' once as I 'ad a handlin' 'twarn't often as I swerved

Fro' the way o' work an' munney; tho' I rode to
'ounds jes' to show

I was better than the old Squire for pluck as well
as go:

"Go on, go on, Friend Thomas," he more than once
did croy

When I roared my set excuses for giving him go-boy.

I took good care as 'ow it should be heard by all the
field,

For it fares * to me as fittin' a strong man should
never yield:

If once he do, it's ne'er forgot, while good works is
passed boy,

An' jes' for this I thought as 'ow I'd give him a good
croy;

An' allus when I paid my rent, I screws up in my
fist

A roll o' banknotes for to show the mill had lots o'
grist.

An' faith, he war a cute un as knew the roight about;
The poorer chaps as had their 'rears, he aye w' jeer
an' flout,

Would write to them as "Wild" an' "Wicks," with
never a "Sir" or "Dear":

I'on't 'a' took that style fro' he—you mark me—never
fear!

He'd write to me as meek as milk, an' sign himself
"dear friend":

He knew his man, an' showed it too in ways as he
cudna mend.

* Fares = seems, feels.

He'd tell me jes' whene'er I loiked to go an' have a
bird,
" Tho' of the same you'll ha' the sense niver to say
one word,
For, as you know, the rest would loike that privilege
as well,
And some young sparks, without my leave, can make
their powder tell,
But you've a still tongue in your head, so shoot
away, old friend ;
I daresay you will take good care o' the foxes up the
Bend."

They're allus talkin' nowadays about 'ow 'ard it be
To make the munney, and they loikes to poke their
fun at me
About my 'underd thousand, an' they say I'd foind it
'ard
To make it now when virtoo a'n't quite its own
reward ;
But I'm certain sure as 'ow I'd do the werry same
again,
If 'twould take me summat longer an' be summat
sorer strain.

They forget as 'ow 'tis character as works the
munney out
O' odds and ends an' dodges as no fool 'ud think'
about ;
If things is 'ard 'tis token we as 'ard as nails should
be,
For so ye do the kindness to every one ye see,
As makin' on 'em 'arder to do their 'umble part,
And show us 'ow we all is one and can't get on apart.

But soft i' heid the younger men and easily put out,
They put their shoulders to the wheel but turn the
cart about :

They go by fits and starts indeed, an' seem to me as
tho'

They didn't quite see clear ahead, nor where they
means to go ;

They read too much and dress too foine, and fancy
Nature stroives

To help the man as wishes well, no matter how he
droives.

I seed at fust as talkin' warn't no one bit o' good,
For whiles ye talk there's summat as still as stone
has stood

That oughter 'ave gone forrard, just loike them
backer 'oss,

As won't be stirred i' turnin' for all ye rave and
cuss :

My mind is clear that men to work had best no
scholars be ;

It makes 'em flighty, like the 'oss, as letten run too
free.

The new Passon he cums over, an' talks to me about
change ;

The feller has words and phrases as sound so big
an' strange :

When he preaches he rolls fro' soide to soide as if
on ship at sea—

He was once a navy chaplain ; an' twice I've
diddled he,

An' toimes ha' made him hazy-loike, wi' my good old
overproof,

For I tellee Passon, wi' all his grace, fro' *it* can't
stand aloof.

An' that moinds me too o' other toimes when Baddeley
 rode to 'ounds,
 An' wi' lang black coat ower his red coat set out on
 his mornin' rounds,
 An' made his calls, and met his 'oss at the corner
 by the wood,
 An' oft was in at the death, and oft brought 'ome a
 brush roight good,
 As he'd hang in the Wicarage lobby; an' nobody
 thought it wrong,
 For Baddeley had the munney, d'ye see? an' was
 good for woine and song.
 O Lord! I moind when Johnny Sims died up at
 Easterfleet,
 As Baddeley 'ad forgot the day, and was early off to
 the Meet;
 An' didn' cum 'ome till evenin'-toime, and the coffin
 lay till then
 I' the Church, an' Baddeley buried he wi'out the
 Clerk's Amen—
 Wi' his surplice ower his red coat, as sure as I'm
 aloive,
 An' his top boots on, an' that was about 1835.
 Ah, Baddeley he war a feller as was niver once
 put out,
 He allus took things easy, an' was fond o' a quiet
 bout;
 The Church might fill or empty, it niver troubled he,
 An' when the Sexton told him as the Methodies 'ud
 be
 The masters o' the *living*, he quietly laughed, an'
 said,—
 "If they 'ave 'em when they're *livin'*, John, we'll get
 'em when they're dead."

O Lord ! I moinds it 'appened once on a Sunday later
May,
When for years an' years we 'adn't 'ad a 'otter,
thirstier day,
As Baddeley, o'ercome wi' 'eat, in readin'-desk fell
sound
As t'quire war singin' anthem, his face hid in his
gownd ;
An' the Clerk he sends the folks away, and nudges
Baddeley then—
Wi' "They're out, Sir," an', half-awake, he say,
" Well, *fill 'em up again !* "

Ah, an' then there warn't no railways a-whiskin' the
men away,
An' teachin' of 'em to unite an' that, an' weekly club
their pay,
Jes' for to spite us masters, an' no free-trade—the
curse,
As is meant to profit furiners an' make us farmers
worse.
The railroads 'a' done a deal o' 'arm—an' throw folks
in a maze :
You can't no more depend on men no matter what
you pays.

What good in helpin' furiners, and folks at 'ome in
want ?
I know a trick worth two o' that—you'll find 'em
werry scant
In gratitude or e'en respect when once they've 'ad
their way ;
Will empty out yer pockets and yer trade will take
away,

And then abuse you all about as Great Fool No. 1.
Upon my soul, I wonder that the country still goes
on !

That new-come feller down the way he often talks
to me,
Wi' airs and graces, bless my soul ! about *equality* ;
And praises Liberals as the chaps to save the
country still ;
Good Heavens ! the men speak loike to pumps and
gild the free-trade pill,
That so their own folks bear the brunt o' others' greed
and gain !—
No, I'm for statesmen as will make our own way
sweet and plain.

As for them ballot-boxes, an' all that sort o' thing,
'Twas better when men drank an' croied for country
an' for King,
An' woted as their masters bade—the few as 'ad the
vote—
An' niver dreamt o' goin' back, an' turnin' o' their
coat :
The “good old times” won't come again wi' all yer
speechifoyin',
An' the men as crow so crowsely now may foind Joe
Arch's troyin'.

Ah, them war the days I tellee, when people warn't
so nice,
An' didn' go for to screw up their face as if they'd
got in a vice

On Sundays, if not other days, and dress so spruce
an' so foine,
That, demme, if you could tell now the labourer's
gell fro' moine,
What good o' troyin' to make out as these days is the
best,
When wi' Radicals an' Unions we don't 'ave no bit
o' rest?

An' as to meetin' o' old loves, that's no bit temptation
now;
I'd rayther not meet one or two, or I fear there 'ud
be a row:
There was Susy Dale, the dairymaid, wi' a devil of a
tongue,
An' Jemima Blake, the dressmaker, as once I did put
wrong,
An' I fear I'd ha' tiffs wi' the widder, if she knew as
I took her
Jes' for the bit o' tin, an' toimes a younger sort 'ud
prefer.

I 'on't pretend as I'm sick o' life to please a priest at
all,
I 'ouldn't give up my nightly punch at any Passon's
call;
I 'ave done so well down 'ere, I say, an' 'ere I 'ave
all as I need—
A good glass o' ale to drink all toimes, an' a good
round o' beef for feed:
I a'n't no wish for to go, an' I a'n't wi'out work for
to do,
For th' young lot a'n't much good—allus on for
summat new.

I a'n't o' them as 'on't 'ave nought o' other folks' jokes
an' fun ;
God bless ye, even at eighty-foive I a'n't a peaky
one :
But Blacksmith he do 'ave a turn for talkin' an'
singin' o' 'ymns :
He play the organ o' Sundays, his old heid full o' 'is
whims,
Wi' a band o' youngsters round he, a-squallin' up
to the skies,
An' a-turnin' of their heads, like birds, an' showin'
the whites o' their eyes.

III.

IN THE SNOW-DRIFT.

AS I tuned my pipes at the turn o' the wood,
A hare started up, ran a bit, and then stood
For a moment, and leered at me there!
Oh, why did I not turn me back at the sight
Of the warning wraith in the dim moonlight
And the dancing frosty air?
(O doggie, 'tis nigh over now,—
The cold creeps up on my brow!)

Come near me, good dog, creep close to my breast;
You might bring me some help—nought now could
arrest

The dull cold pain gnawing here.
I would fain touch the pipes just for once again;
I could play now, I feel, a far sweeter strain
Than e'er filled a dancer's ear!
(O doggie, 'tis nigh over now,—
The cold creeps up on my brow!)

'Twas strange that the thoughts of old times drew
me on,

Like a call from some old mossy witches' stone,
And led me to Eachan's door;
I couldn't draw back tho' I knew there was ill
In the sky and the air, which was heated and still,
Tho' the Winter was only half o'er.
(Good doggie, come near me now,
I may still feel your breath on my brow!)

There were all the bride's friends, and strangers
galore ;

Old Eachan himself was right keen for a splore,

And offered me dram o' the best ;—

How it went in my blood : the pipes seemed to know

'Twas the last of their master's breath he would blow

Before sinking down into rest !

(Old doggie, keep near me now !

Your tongue's like a hand on my brow !)

And the bride, like a vision to eyes grown dim,

With her brow so white, and her middle so slim,

Made my old blood dance again :

For her own mother's picture she was, at the time

When I was a young one all in my prime,

And dreamtna my love was in vain.

(Come near me, good dog, come near,—

Tho' there's nothing for me to fear !)

Old Eachan he won her—he ne'er knew my plight,

And for long I took care to be out of their sight

At the kirk, or e'en at the fair ;

Till I heard she had died when her baby was born,

And then was an end of my anger and scorn,

And also an end of my care !

(O doggie, 'tis all done now,—

The cold creeps over my brow !)

How I watched the girl as from year to year

She grew up as shapely, and straight, and clear

As the birch on the mountain side :

Ah me, as a father I felt indeed—

Two fathers she had for a mother's meed :

Two old hearts she filled with pride.

(Good dog, come close to my breast,—

I feel that it brings me rest !)

How the old grow young thro' the fresh young heart ;
And the glance of the eye that can faith impart

Makes Spring to bloom once more :

The springs of joy that we thought were dead
Burst up, and a morning greenness spread

Even by the barren shore.

(Come near me, good dog, come near,—

Tho' there's nought for me to fear !)

Forgive him ! I did : and I'm thankful now
That I held my revenge in my hand : for I vow

'Twas the best of revenge I had ;

For now indeed old Eachan will grieve.

That his lassie's friend has taken his leave

And at that I am right glad.

(O doggie, creep closer still,

For you seem to drive off ill !)

Did I ne'er love again ? Well, the truth to say,

It may be I did in a kind of a way,

But 'twas only a mild affair ;

For the first love, 'tis plain, can come but once

When the soul is rapt in a kind of trance

And we walk as if on air.

(O doggie, I think of the days gone by

And am glad with an easy mind I die.)

I see all the Sound, tho' my old eyes are shut,

And the dogs all a-crouching around the hut,

As in Summer days by-gone !

How I played the strathspey at the last,—I'm sure

They felt even like spirits on that clay floor,—

And I die here all alone,—

God, listen to my moan !

(Good-bye, old dog, we must part ;

I feel the cold clutch at my heart !)

[*Good Words.*]

IV.

OH, MY AULD GUDEMAN.

(JEAN ELSHENDER SPEAKS.)

OH, my auld gudeman, hoo he's failin', he's failin' !
He canna tak' count o' the cattle or crap;
He stoiters aboot, an' hings on by the palin',
An' staggers, puir man, when he comes tae a slap.

Ah, I mind when his back it was stracht as the
willow ;

An' his hair it was glossy an' dark ower his broo ;
An' his step it was licht—oh, there wasna his fellow :
His ee black an' piercin', the smile roun' his moo.

An' aye at the kirk, whether preachin' or singin',
I thocht 'at he lookit gey aften at me ;
But we were sae puir—there was nocht I cud bring
him,
Sae I tried nae to think he was lookin' at me.

But ae day he met me as hame I was turnin',
Doon by the strip that rins up to oor door ;
An' he said for my true love his heart it was yearnin',
An' wad I no meet him at nicht by Raigmore.

My hert gied a dunt ; an' I spak na a word,
I just stow a glance at his bonny black ee ;
An' then I ran aff, like some sma' frichtened bird,
An' grat when I got by mysel' for a wee.

A silly bit lass I maun surely hae been,
Tae rin frae a lad 'at I likit an' mair :—
I micht just taen the proffer o' love he had gien,
An' tell't him to speak to my minnie doon there.

That was just what he did tae afore verra lang :
An' ne'er did a true love rin smother, I'm sure
Tho' his father to pit him a' past me was thrang—
Found oot I was waikly as weel as was puir.

But my brave lad he tell't them his word he had gien,
An' noo, tho' he wanted, nae change wad he mak,
An' married an' happy the lang years we've been,
An' we've foun' 'at the burden is eased to the back.

For strong as he lookit, 'twas him 'at fell by,
An' for lang he lay helpless, an' needit me aft ;
An' doctors, an' frien's, wha upon me wad spy,
At last wad alloo I had sum wifelike craft.

An' stronger I grew as the years they passed on,
An' abler, in maist things, a helpmeet to be :
Baith buyin' an' sellin' I aften hae dune,
An' hae stood in the market the men-folk tae fee.

Some said I was brazen, some said I was coarse,
But ne'er for a mament was he oot o' mind ;
An' sure ane can ne'er for sic work be the worse,
If it's duty that mak's the sad hert sae inclined.

An' whiles I'm afeared he has suffered sae sore,
He may leave me ahint him to pine by my lane ;
For oor twa bonnie bairns hae gaen on afore,
Tae welcome us yonder when we may be taen.

But whaever gaes first, it will no muckle maiter—
It's only a day or twa's differ at most—
True love is the union our spirits that fetter,
An' no a true thrill o' the hert's ever lost.

V.

OH, THE DOITERED AULD MAN.

(EPPIE CRUIKSHANKS SPEAKS.)

OH, the doitered auld man, hoo it fykes me tae see
him

Gae stoiterin' an' stacherin' frae stable tae byre;
He's aye gettin' draiglit if I binna wi' him,
But, unlike burnt bairns, he dreeds na the fire.

He's as fashious as can be, an' grunts ower his siller,
An' bargles aboot it, as gin I wad steal;
He scolds aboot 'counts that hae come frae the miller,
An' vows he has sent us some ither folks' meal.

He's blear-ee'd an' blin', an' his bluid it's sae cauld
That I canna keep hoggers to haud him in heat!
It's a dull life, aye, 'deed 'tis—tae live wi' the auld
An' sometimes amaist I aloo mysel' beat.

What pleasure in life can a dozent auld carle
Hae doiterin' along sae an' wearied o' a' ?—
His senses e'en makin' a fule o' the warl';
Is't cruel to wiss siccan ane quietly awa' ?

Nae comfort o' words 'at tae ithers are sweet,
Nae bairnies to cheer me when I am alane;
Nae glint o' an ee, like a starlicht, tae meet
Yer ain when the tears dinna fa' for the pain.

Gin it werena for thochts that on someday ere lang
I may see mysel' left wi' the Limekills an' a',
The siller safe bankit—me strappin' an' strang---
I cudna gae on as I hae dune ava.

I was just a bit lassie, they married me tae him—
The siller was a'thing, they thocht na o' me;
I hae fochten tae dae a gude wife's duty by him—
But, hech! I ne'er promist my hale hert tae gie!

He promist tae love me an' cherish me fairly;
But, 'deed, a' the 'nursin' is needit frae me!
It's an ae-sided bargain—his pairt dune but sparely—
But still a gude wife I hae fochten tae be.

Tae command ane tae luve is a gey ticklish maiter,—
Tae bind ane tae luve whar nae love was afore
Is a mockin' o' Providence—thochts winna fetter;
An' often my thochts will gae past my ain door!

For Johnny the miller he coortit me fair,
An' a bachelor bidden for my sake alane—
Do ye haud that it's wrang tae think o' him the mair
The mair 'at my auld mannie's waikness is seen?

Oh true love may well mak a puir body strang
Tae battle an' fecht wi' the dull odds o' life;
But it's sma' length 'at siller or comfort will gang
When ye're just a bit house-gear an' naething o'
wife.

VI.

THE STONE GOAT ON BLACKHALL GATE.

HOW oft, with vagrant steps, I strayed
In boyhood's golden prime,
By Blackhall's gate, and there surveyed
An emblem from old time :

A carven goat above the gate,
And oft its shadow lay,
Soft, soft, as Summer days wore late,
Upon the dusty way.

Perhaps heraldic meanings deep
Lay in its quaint surprise ;
Perhaps it did some memory keep
Of warmer Southern skies.

Some ancient warrior, bronzed and grim,
As trophy may have borne
The effigy from Spain with him
This gateway to adorn.

I knew not : only strange it seems :
It charmed my boyish gaze,
Became the centre of the dreams
That cheered my youthful days.

In it I saw some fitness fair—
Some token of the wild ;
It drew me with its *outré* air—
For I was then a child—

To lands of brighter sun where glow
The orange and the vine,
And where from sweetest hills down flow
The dews that grow to wine.

I've wandered much o'er earth since then,
And many sights have seen :
I've known the depths that are in men
Of sin and ill, I ween,

In cities where the souls are dull
To beauty and to grace,
Even as the light ne'er falls at full
Within their dwelling place.

And now when crossed the mournful line
The Psalmist yields to man,
My sober steps once more incline
The olden scenes to scan.

Once more I turn to Blackhall's gate,
To seek my image fair :
The carven goat ; but 'tis too late ;
No image now is there !

I pause, astonished, on the spot
Where oft I've looked with glee,
And questioned if that wondrous goat
Could ever think of me.

Instead are masons at their task
Of smoothing down the stone :
I go to them and earnest ask,
Where is the old goat gone ?

They smile and look as tho' I were
Some one of wandering mind ;
They cannot guess why I should stare
For what I cannot find.

They point me to a corner wild,
Where heaps of rubbish lie,
And on the top in fragments piled
My image meets my eye.

No more on Blackhall's gate set high
The goat will meet the sun,
Or tell by deepening tints that die
That day is nearly done.
One fragment small and shapeless—see!—
I brought, and there it lies—
The centre of a world to me,
Tho' nought to other eyes.
And still, as oft I look, high stands
The goat in morning fair,
The sunlight quivering into bands
Of gold upon it there.
Even so exist all symbols fair,
Linked close to heart and mind :
We bring the beauty, love—all rare—
The dust we leave behind.
All images of youthful dreams,
When life's sharp storms have played,
May lapse, but comes a touch, it seems
That nothing is decayed.
And so the goat forever stands
For me on Blackhall's gate ;
The sign of fair delightful lands
No hand can desecrate.

[This poem was suggested by an incident in his own experience told the author by an old friend, the late Mr. James Kerr, a city missionary in Glasgow, who, to the deep regret of many, died in September 1892. The stone goat was, of course, the heraldic device of the Bedford or Russell family, who at one time owned the place; a goat being their crest: but it is just as much of course, that the boy knew nothing of this. In an old *Guide to Deeside*, which is written in a quaint, often comical style, there is this notice of the Blackhall goat: "The goat is the crest of the Russell family, to whom the property once belonged, and under it is written their motto, 'Che sara sara,' which, I am positively assured, means, 'What will be, will be.'"]

VII.

THE TANGLED SKEIN.

THE world's a tangled skein, my child, like that
ye hold i' your hand,
There's nought but sometime goes amiss, be it ever
so well planned ;
Life's best may be patient waiting, when our heart
is at its ease,
As they say there's always quiet at the bottom o'
the seas :
However wild the waves, they say, deep down is
quiet rest ;
And so the great peace, my child, is in God's deep o'
the breast.
And I think if we took counsel of what our spirit
tells,
And thought of our good Maker more than of any
object else,
That each of us might do our part to bring that
peace to all ;
And so the world become again like it was before
the Fall.

But we run, and, all impatient, break and pull the
threads awry,
And seldom think we're much to blame, although
we never try
To gather up the ragged ends we've left there in
our haste,
But fancy God will knit them up and pardon all our
waste.
And, I think, our God does knit them up a scourge
for us at last,
For every fault comes back to us with other faults
o'ercast ;

Till of the whole it looks as tho' God's Providence
was bent
A patched and ugly dress to make out of our foiled
intent,
To wrap us round with misery, unless we strive to
show
Our penitence, and willingness to work for Him
below ;
And then He takes the garment, and He dyes it all
of one,
Till it shines a spotless token of the beauty we'll
put on,
When the Son will lead us glorified before the great
white throne.

I love to talk of heavenly things and tell you what I
think,
As here we sit at evenings when the sun begins to
sink ;
When father chats with sister Kate, and the great
mill is at rest,
It's like a foretaste o' the joy that's promised to the
blest.
I dunno think I make it plain, as Parson does, you
know ;
But of my words you'll maybe think when I lie still
and low.
I'm sure of this, that happiness ne'er comes by heap-
ing gain,
But only to a humble mind, contented to remain
In patient, meek obedience to God and His commands,
Well-pleased to leave the things of time entirely in
His hands.

[*Sunday Mag.*]

VIII.

"BRAVE BROTHER NED."

AH, the men must work
Tho' death is nigh ;
They must sail the sea
While it rages high ;
When little ones toss
On their beds at home,
They must steer away
Out over the foam !

I shall ne'er forget
How he looked that day—
When he rowed his boat
Fast into the bay ;
And hailed me quick
As I went along :
In my ears the sound
Of the boatmen's song.

And I told him true—
"He is better, Ned " ;
For I could not say
That the child was dead ;
And a gleam of joy
Came over his face,
And a light in his eye
Shone for a space.

When he looked again,
My face told true
How my words were meant
To soften his rue ;

And he jumped ashore,
My brave brother Ned,
And slowly we walked
To the high cliff head.

And all that he said
When we reached the "Brow"
Was, "Sister, you've known
Such care ere now.
I must bear up too,
But the weight is sore,
Tho' 'he is not lost,
Only gone before.'

But how can I bear
The stillness at home,
Where was laughter once,
And 'father is come!'
And the little tricks
He was wont to play—
Oh, sister, you feel
What I *cannot* say."

And he staggered in
Like a man that's broke;
Of Charlie, the child,
Now he seldom spoke;
But before age came
He was white as snow,
Such a power *they* have
O'er our lives below.

[*Sunday Mag.*]

IX.

"THIS IS MY LAST MESSAGE."

["Several incidents of heroism stand out very brightly amid the dark deeds of crime which have been the succeeding accompaniments of the great Pennsylvanian floods. Here is a particularly prominent one. Mrs. Ogle, the Johnstown manageress of the Western Union Telegraph Company, was working in the telegraph room when the news of the flood came. Notwithstanding repeated notifications to get out of reach of the approaching danger, she stood by the instruments with unflinching loyalty and undaunted courage, sending words of warning to those in danger in the valley below. When every station in the path of the coming torrent had been warned, she wired her companion at South Fork, 'This is my last message,' and at that very moment the torrent engulfed her."—*The Echo*, June 4, 1889.]

THEY come with their warnings and bid me haste
Adown the vale, for the flood is near;
I turn me away—not a moment to waste—
Tho' it may be I tremble, not all with fear.

Oh, steady my hand, tho' my heart may beat!
If the wires *do* tell that I trembling stand,
May it only impel them to swifter retreat
Before the monster so near at hand.

Oh, hands, be fleet; oh, heart, be still,
Oh, wires, bear swiftly the words I give:
There are thousands may flee from the coming ill,
And babes and children be saved to live!

Ah, full in my ears comes the hollow boom—
The rush of the waters that speed apace ;
I hear them growl as with thunder-doom,
As they gather and grow in their headlong race.

The last of the messages I shall send,
To warn my friends in the vale below :
South Fork is safe ; I have come to the end :
I have done all I could, and now I go.

* * * * *

But just as she spoke the waters rolled
Around and engulfed her, and bore her away :
But her deeds shall live, and her tale be told
With joyful tears for many a day :

To assure us that heroes are not yet dead ;
And to tell that from duty thus well done,
For others' sakes, there is ever bred
A bliss that inspires and leads men on.

[The Welcome.]

X.

SISTER HELEN.

WE three were little children
When mother passed away,
And the sad silence on the house
Endured but for a day :

We recked not of the value
Of the treasure that was gone ;
And our toys and many pleasures
Were fresh to us anon.

We played and rambled carelessly
All thro' the dear old place ;
We sang the songs she'd taught us,
Till sister Helen's face

Was turned upon us gravely,
As to certain words we came—
And then she'd whisper, "Hush, my dears,"
In tones not all of blame.

We hardly understood it then—
We saw, but scarce could tell
The reason why our Helen's tears
In silent moments fell ;—

Why often after bedtime,
When the childish prayers were said,
With the wonted "Bless mamma, dear,"
She lingered by our bed ;

And sometimes as we rose again,
On questionings intent,
We'd see the dew within her eyes
As over us she bent,
With a look of love so tender,—
Oh, I think I see her now,
Tho' long she's been in heaven above,
And there's silver on my brow.

She taught us all our lessons,
And kept us trim and neat;
We never went uncared for,
Nor missed the birthday treat;
If aught was e'er kept from us—
We know the secret now—
'Twas because we could not prize it,
And love would not allow.

Oh, the long, long Summer evenings
When we were home from school,
How she would help us with our tasks,
Oft making plain "the rule":

And then the lovely Autumn days
Along the country lanes,
When we wandered till the evening,
And the lights danced in the panes!

She knew about the flowers and trees,
And showed us where there grew
What loveliest and sweetest were
Of star-worts, pansies blue;
Where lords-and-ladies gay were bright,
And daisies pranked the dell,
And where the bindweed, snowy-white,
Grew thick, close by blue-bell.

Oh, noble sister Helen—
She was sister, mother too,
She only lingered on to see
Our childhood's perils thro' ;

And then the angels came for her—
What better could they do ?—
Perhaps she prayed to be taken home,
That she still might have her due

Of watching o'er her children
Out in the world's wide way ;
And make avail to keep them still
Secure on Him to stay.

But we, we knew when she had passed
The worth of mother's love :
The sister's heart had interpreted
The mother's heart above.

[*Sunday Mag.*]

II.

LYRICAL PIECES.

THE ECHO OF A SONG.

*FOR all we sing, there still remains
The echo of a song behind :
We cannot give it voice : it gains
In measure as it holds the mind.*

*And ever as we make essay
To clothe in words the music there,
We know for all we give away
We still must keep the ampler share.*

*Within, still sounds the rhythmic spell
Of thought and passion, loves and tears ;
As in the windings of the shell
The listener still old ocean hears.*

*The songs unsung are more than those
That hold men's hearts ; yet no song were
Did these die out, as thro' the rose
The root can feel the quivering air :*

*And throb and grow because its crown
Is seen of men, sunkissed and sweet,
And eve and morn's soft dews come down
To make its trembling bliss complete.*

*So songs are sung, and music grows
To more, because the listener hears,
And longs and loves the more he knows
Of songs unheard by mortal ears.*

*In one fond tie are softly bound
The singer and his audience meet :
The pain of one, the joy is found
Of other ; and their gains are sweet.*

*Both dark and light they interchange :
Their loss and gain they give and take ;
And thus with sweet delights they range ;
And all for unsung music's sake.*

[Victorian Mag.]

I.

THE UNSEEN SINGER.

OFt in lonesome evenings darkling
Sit I in my rooms and muse,
As the street-lamps cast a sparkling
Shimmer amid deepening hues.

As I muse, not seldom rising,
Like an echo of dream-strain,
Sweetest notes of song, enticing,
Float, and fall, and come again.

The singer never saw I, know not
If 'tis child or woman fair ;
I know but this—in some still spot
An angel-voice trills out an air.

It may be of the Middle Ages,
When the knights and ladies gay,
With plumes, and hawks on wrist, and pages,
Cast a glory on the way ;

Or of later times, when passion
Wells from deeps that cynics say
Were long since closed by Tyrant Fashion,
Nevermore on life to play.

Be it song of past or present,
One fair echo bides with me,—
Draws me from my lot unpleasant,
In green bowers to wander free :

By groves, and streams, and pine-trees singing
To the breeze, to fairy dells;
And where moonlit woods are flinging
Shadows o'er the sweet blue-bells,

That sleep and dream, or whisper lowly
Secrets to the fairies still,
As the clouds unwinding slowly
Drop their silver on the hill.

Music! magic charm to raise us
Over harsher life, to long
For purer joys, above all praises—
Capturing Pleasure by a song!

The singer, like a bird, enshrouded—
Unknown, hidden, yet can give
A glimpse of light and love unclouded,
By which the heart of man may live.

O sweetest law of Nature's making:
None may live for self alone;
But voicing pleasure, shares it, taking
Tribute of sad hearts unknown.

II.
OCTOBER.

I.

OFt they say thy garb is sober ;
But I love thee, ripe October !
Some there be thy looks regret,
And long for April violet—
While thou hast o'er the woodlands shed
Thy "glory-leaves" of gold and red,
And touched the pathways with a light
That mocks the hues of Spring-time bright—
Wrapt all the world in livery gay,
To reconcile us to decay.

II.

How kind thou art to meet us so,
With pomp and grace where'er we go :
The leaves that rustle as we pass
Along the softly-yellowing grass,—
The shimmering maze of mist that lies
Upon the hills, like brooding skies,
And, creeping, melts, at last to make
A shield 'gainst which the sun may shake
Such shafts as Summer never knew,
That break amid the breezy blue.

III.

Thou clothest the bare fields with grain,
Whence nimble Fancy reaps again
Her harvests of full-ripened hope,
And, pointing far beyond the scope
Of earth, and her most fruitful yield,
Holdst up to view another field,
Wherein the fruits and flowers that grow
Nor waste nor sad decay can know.

[*Good Words.*]

III.

A DEBT UNPAID.

OH, my Love, you are still so lowly,
Always when I am with you ;
'Tis your meekness makes me unable
To render you all your due.

For you gave me the hope and courage,
Thro' the ranks to win my way ;
Your love the sun that broke my cloud,
And forth came the dewy day :

Like the sunshine was your presence,
And my fears fled like the rain :
The daylight of joy rose on the night
Of my doubt and despair and pain.

If I had the power to repay you,
No princess should be so shrined ;
You should walk among endless pleasures,
Alike for the sense and the mind.

'Tis well that my poverty serves me
At once for my grief and my stay ;
For, ah, some debts are sweeter to owe
Than if we could tenfold pay.

[*Good Words.*]

IV.

THE CUCKOO'S SONG.

THE cuckoo from the wood I hear ;
He has no thought to fill *my* ear ;
And yet the note comes full to me—
The note of bird in ecstasy.

Continuous, clear, it floats and fills
The air with soft impassioned thrills,
And calls to mind the Springs gone-by
When I had gracious company.

Alas ! and now I walk alone,
And listen to the swelling tone,
And think, and think how rich I was
Before that change had come to pass.

Nature abides—the same her voice
As in the days I could rejoice ;
But now the sounds that once made glad,
Wake but old memories sweet as sad.

The soft regrets that yet I bear—
The thought of that old anxious care—
Is with me still, tho' it has passed :
Ah, would that even such cares could last.

One hope we have : for nought is lost,
And, tho' our dearest wish is crost,
The love remains, and wakes again
On hearing some familiar strain.

Oh, world of beauty, world of awe!
Where joy and sorrow have one law,—
Alike bear witness for us fair
That what was once is ever there!

The seasons pass with steady range,
Commingle of the old and strange;
And each has voices that can wake
The echoes in our souls that break

Thro' all the wrappings of routine,
And tell that all the might-have-been
Is sealed in love—the partnered peace,
Which, having been, can never cease.

[*The Sun Mag.*]

V.

ECHOES

I.—VOICES FROM BELOW.

LIKE a twinkling star
In a northern zone,
The peak gleams afar,
And beckons us on.

Deep calm brooding there
Will give rest from the strife—
Sweet thoughts flowing fair
From new fountains of life.

Oh, we pant for the purer
Of streams to allay
Our thirst, and give surer
Access to the day.

Softest moonlight there lays
Pearly touch upon all :
No cloud on the ways,
Nor the risks of a fall.

Oh, would we were higher—
We are pilgrims below—
And our fancies aspire
To the region of snow;

Where our breasts may repose
From the fever and strain,
And the life-stream that flows
Bring our youth back again

II.—VOICES FROM ABOVE.

DOWNWARD darkly dash the waters
Leaping from the peak—
Thick mists arise to obscure the skies :
'Tis vision that we seek !

Oh, the waters downward rushing
How brightly from below,
Are dark as night, a terrible might
In the roar of their flow.

Oh, we sigh for the calmer regions,
Where the grassy dells
Blush bright with flowers beneath the showers,
And the corn kindly swells

To a fairer, sweeter harvest
Than cheers the world of snow,—
When the awful sight of the winter night,
And the avalanche below,

Let no eyelid close in slumber,
But strike the heart like death,
As the storm seems to die away in a sigh,
Like a giant that holds his breath,

And rushes forth to the fight again
With louder clamour still :
Alas, that we chose to leave the repose
Of the humble home on the hill !

For now we long to return again,
To drink from an emptied cup ;
And the downward gaze in the weary days
More sad than the looking up.

[*Good Words.*]

VI.

THREE FLOWERS.

THREE bonny flowerets once had I,
Looked up with eyes of blue,
Sweetly to the heavens sweet,
And eager for the dew,—
That fell upon them softly
In the morning fresh and clear ;
And oh, they promised perfect forms
As ever man did rear.

I watched them with the eyes of love,
And saw the promise grow ;—
The shapely grace, the depth of hue,
The fragrance and the glow ;
A pearl of shell-like purity,
The ground whereon there played
The radiance of the rainbow,
In sunshine or in shade.

But first there came an east wind,
That nipt my tallest Fair,
It lingered for a little while,
Then fell and faded there ;
And next there came a hoar-frost
That stole within my gate,
In spite of all my watching
That early was and late.

And soon it laid another low,
And nought but dust remained
Of all the wondrous beauty,
With pride, that I had trained ;
And then there came a cankerworm
That smote my latest flower ;
Ah me ! it shrunk before my eyes,
And withered in an hour.

A heap of common earth, no more !—
My garden-plot lies bare ;
The winds sweep o'er it freely,
But ah, the sweeter air
That cheered my lonely hours of old
No longer wanders by ;
And when on other's flowers I look,
I cannot help but sigh.

[*Good Words.*]

VII.

REGAINED.

I.

LIKE the notes that stir and die
When a harp-string snaps in twain
Like a fading sunset sky
After driving wind and rain ;
Like a sound within a shell,
Like an odour on the air,
Like an echo in a dell,
Like a star, remote and fair,
Oh, my child, thou art to me !
And my soul is linked to thine,
As the pale moon draws the sea,
Or the sun lifts up the vine.

II.

In the passion of my tears,
In the blindness of my grief,
Thro' the melancholy years,
I eschewed the sweet relief :
And I stretcht my yearning hands
Thro' the dark, to clasp thee near,—
But to bind me in the bands
Of an ever-haunting fear ;
I smiled on those beside me
And deemed I did thee wrong,
And dreamt thou might'st deride me
For sharing joy or song.

III.

Now, thy fair face comes back to me,
All free from tear or stain :
A brighter image of thyself—
Triumphant over pain.
I sought it not, for, heedless,
I nursed my own despair ;
And so I hold it likeness
Of reality, most fair :
No picture could unfold it
To any stranger's eye ;
'Tis like a starlet shining
Within a Winter sky.

[*Good Words.*]

VIII.

HEATHER AND ORCHIDS:

ON RECEIVING A PACKET OF HEATHER AND WILD ORCHIDS
FROM A FRIEND IN THE DEESIDE HIGHLANDS, JULY 14, 1888.

O H, the heather from the Highlands,
And the orchids from the height,
Make me dream of hills and islands
Where the sun is shining bright :

Where the water gleams an answer
To the beacon of the height,
And the day-dawn but fulfilleth
All the glory of the night :

Where the stars and flowers do marry
In the moonlight up on high ;
And it seems that nought doth tarry
But the loving poet's eye.

I have made myself a symbol
Of your world of fair delight,
With my heather and my orchids
All arranged before my sight.

And I sit and dream, and slowly
My chamber walls divide,
And away doth pass, like cloudland,
All the brickwork at my side ;

And I range upon the hill-tops
Amid the wilds with you ;
And a world of glory opens
Upon my joyful view.

Ah, the world we make is greater
Than the world in which we are ;
We can be the grand creator
Of our Heaven, with shining star.

And the Heather and the Orchids
Are blooming fresh—and will—
With a power to bear me often
To the river and the hill.

Ah, such a faithful servant
Is the friendly touch and true :
I am on the hills and walking
Amid the flowers with you.

IX.

DAWN IN THE SWISS MOUNTAINS.

I.

DARKNESS melting into dawn,
As the mists seem downward drawn
Grey to blue and blue to white,
Surging in like waves of light :
In the eastward like an eye,
The sun sends glances up on high,
Flooding all the purple sky ;
Then he bathes the mountain-tops
In a golden shower of drops,—
Until hill and field and stream
Are folded in the mystic gleam.

II.

Snowy summits thus transfigured,
Smitten with the rosy glow,
Answer to the depths below ;
While the rush of many torrents
Bounding in their downward flow,
Seem to pause as life awakens :—
Knots of peasants moving slow
To their labours, and the cowbells,
Waving gently to and fro,
Sound the sweetest of refrains
As o'er the grassy slopes they go.

X.
THE HEROES OF COLWYN BAY.

A BALLAD.

[¹A number of brave fellows at Colwyn Bay could get no lifeboat from Llandudno, because it was already engaged in the work of rescue, nor from Llandudna, because it had been out saving life, and had been too much damaged to be serviceable. So they fetched a broad-beam open boat, and with that they made an effort to reach four shipwrecked men who were clinging to the rigging, while the showers of spray swept over them at every moment. Again and again the boat and its occupants were hurled back upon the beach. For four hours the Colwyn Bay men fought for the lives of the sailors, and at last they launched their craft a seventh time, and after an exciting struggle brought the men safe ashore. The four men who so courageously manned the boat were—John Jones, quarryman; William Williams, shopkeeper; John Roberts, quarryman; and William Williams, quarryman. The vessel was the *Ocean Queen*, of Padstow."—*The Echo*, Nov. 3, 1890.]

OH, the wind blew fierce o'er Colwyn Bay,
And wildly dashed the rain;
And the waves rose up, like mountains high,
And swept the rocks amain.
Oh, many an eye looked out to sea,
Thro' gleams in the whirling drift,
For the morn was dark, and the blinding spray
Rose high in the cloudy lift.
And sad they were when afar they saw
A ship come driving fast
Before the gale, and her sails in shreds,
And broken was her mast.
She dashed on the rocks, and strained and creaked,
And then she settled down,
But the waves drove o'er her, tho' so close
She lay to the pitying town.

There were four of a crew on board, and they
Seemed doomed to a watery grave,
When a brave man cried, "Who will go with me
In the boat these men to save?"

Then three men said, "We will go with you
In the boat these men to save;
And if we fail, and the sea claims us,
We go to an honoured grave!"

And forth they put, but back were dashed
Before the hungry wave,
And they clenched their teeth and knit their brows,
"We yet these men may save!"

Aye, once and again they back were dashed,
And again they faced that tide;
And at last o'er the back of a monster wave
The boat touched that ship's side.

Like a cockle-shell she tossed about,
But the men held firm to oar,
And at last the crew stepped into the boat,
And at last were brought to shore;

For fifty gallant men who saw
These heroes toil to save,
When the boat beat back, rushed into the sea,
And dragged her from the wave.

Oh, yet in breasts of our countrymen
Beat hearts of the heroes old;
And the deed of the men of Colwyn Bay
Shall yet be often told!
[*British Workman.*]

XI.

A TRUE HERO.

[“In the recent flooding of the Ravenswharf Pit, near Dewsbury, Yorkshire, there occurred a most touching incident. Some men had just gone down in the cage, and two of them were still standing not far from it, when ominous signs were noticed. One of the two men, named Lamb, got into the cage, and, giving the signal, was wound up safely. The other man, named Swallow, ran toward his two sons, who were working a mile away in the pit, with the result that he was among those that lost their lives. Lamb, the only man rescued, said, ‘I am a fireman at the pit, and went down at ten o’clock along with Dick Swallow and the rest. Soon after lighting the fire, the smoke came the wrong way, and I knew water was coming down the air-shaft. Swallow, who was near at the time, saw what had happened, but declined my suggestion to enter the cage and be drawn up. Instead he remarked, “I must go for my lads,” who were fully a mile away in the works. He must have been drowned before he had proceeded many yards. Providential that it did not occur in the daytime, or two hundred lives would have been lost instead of six.’”
—*Daily Newspaper.*]

YOU have heard of ancient heroes
Who for country fought and bled,
Who for others toiled and suffered
As they steadfast marched ahead ;
Whose names are held in honour,
And can never, never die,
While the earth is green beneath us,
And, above, the bright blue sky.
Still to-day the records meet us
Of the heroes true and grand,
Who, by acts of noble daring,
Shed a glory o’er the land ;
Who would risk their lives in saving
Other lives, with latest breath,
Springing forward in their daring
To the cold embrace of death.

In a coal-mine of the north,
For the night shift there went down,
To the deepest workings far below,
Some miners, rough and brown.
And they had scarce been landed
When the smoke came back again,
And they knew that floods were coming
With ruin in their train.

Two beside the cage stood closely,
And said one, "Come, let us go ;
No hope for our poor fellows,
Who are farther on below ;

We have but one brief moment
To save ourselves," he said :
But the other cried, " My lads ! I must
Go seek for them " ; and sped
Along the ways to find the lads
Away more than a mile,
And crashing of the floods was heard
Within a little while.

To save his boys from sudden death
This brave man sudden died,
And his name shall oft hereafter
Be spoken of with pride.

Oh, it was not in the battle,
With hurra of comrades near,
With infectious shout and rattle
Of attack within his ear ;

But alone amid the darkness
Of the flooded mine, he tried
To save his boys, and failing,
Like a hero, nobly died.

XII.
ALBERT VICTOR.
(Obiit Jan. 14, 1892.)

I.

HE died at break of day ;
In Life's fair morn, when soft winds softly play ;
Like to a flower,
That promises to tower
Upward and upward in the fair wind's way,
Cut sudden to the ground,
And leaves but sweetness hovering all around.

II.

Ah, mourn and weep for him—
That in a crown one gem is left more dim ;
That for his sweetness there is vacancy,
And for his grace the coldness of a day
With mist and shadow : ah, his youth was fair ;
This is the only comfort we can share.

III.

For her whose hopes are blighted in their birth—
For whom there may be blessedness—not mirth
For evermore : may she, with lofty soul,
Seek comfort not of earth, and self-control :
Thro' sense of duty making things more fair ;
Assured she thus can still his pathway share.

IV.

And for our widowed Queen, whose heart once more
is torn ;
By loss of loved one left yet more forlorn :
Oh, may her heart be strong
To bear, and go with patience thro' years long
Her gracious way ; and bless her people still,
Till sunshine breaks thro' all the cloud of ill.
For father, mother, may their sorrow grow
To soft regrets not all suffused of woe.

XIII.

IN ARCADIA.

[Accompanied an engraving from Mr. W. Ralston, of
Australian shepherd seated on a gentle slope playing a
pipe.]

DREAMY-SOFT thy lay and tender,
Exile in Australian wild ;

Happy thou, with power to render
Ditties that might soothe a child.

But, oh, touch not strain that's bolder—

Strain that echoed o'er the hills
Of your native land, when older
Days were free from modern ills !

Play for rude content and pleasure ;
Waken not the thoughts untold :
Let the memory hold the measure
Dimly of the songs of old.

Hark, the bell-bird, sudden sounding,
Fills the pauses of the strain ;
And the wayward heart goes bounding,
Hearing village bells again !

Still the sheep are resting yonder,
All the land is softly fair ;
It needs but Pan, with sudden wonder,
To appear, with Pan-pipes there.

Alas ! but Pan is dead, and only
Exiled shepherds chant the strain—
Pipe to pass the day so lonely,
Daring not some songs again.

[*Good Words.*]

XIV.

FAREWELL TO THE OLD YEAR.

OLD year, going 'mid frost and snow,
While loud the norland trumpets blow,
Take, take our blessing ere you go!

Ye brought us weal, ye brought us woe;
Looked oft the friend, sometimes the foe:
We part as friends:—'tis better so.

The good ye brought us none may know;
The ill hath record here below:
To grasp the chances we were slow.

Ye brought us out a goodly show
Of fruit that glittered in the glow;
Rich seed around our path did strow.

We seized the fruit both high and low,
That hung so tempting, row on row,—
The seed we trode, but did not sow!

In other years that seed may grow
A shield from sun and driving snow,
Or waving green on the sad grave-row.

For all the debts the years do owe
Are paid with a hearty overflow,
To them that wrestle and overthrow.

Old year, going 'mid frost and snow,
While loud the norland trumpets blow,
Take, take our blessing ere you go!

[*Good Words.*]

III.

NARRATIVE PIECES.

I.

SIR GUY OF DEVON AND THE HOLY
GRAIL.

THE good Sir Guy of Devon, one of those
That nobly seek, aspire, and never find
The full reward of yearning and of toil,
Rode on, in early Spring, thro' grove and lane
And misty covert, when the dews empearl
The field and forest, and the birds sing sweet
In welcome of the dawn.

The rosy flush,
Like silken scarlet banner borne above
Some hero fresh from giant deeds, whom Fame
Hath chosen for her own, dyed all the sky
To the eastward, while the morning-star
Hung coldly in her sphere, as tho' abashed
Before the growing splendour.

"Such my fate,"
Mused good Sir Guy. "*My* time has past, indeed :
And now I wane ; for, spite of high emprise
And noble aspiration, woe is me !
I am not worthy to be one of those
To rove abroad on this the highest quest.
My soul is dulled with loss and grief, and I
Fail of my wonted zeal and strength, and all
The glow of chivalry that erst did fill
My heart with dreams of conquest and of fame
Gone out, as tho' in ashes. Nevermore
Will breath of praise beguile me into joy,
Nor rush of onset quicken blood in me,

When that the lists are set and ladies gaze,
Nor flash of spear or sword make heart to dance,
Nor smile of child or woman make me glad,
As in the olden time. How changed am I,
Who once was buoyant as the April breeze,
Or yellow daffodil that dances in it !
It seems as tho' the very earth were chill
And dead, nor loved me more. Ah, woe is me :
For, since my lady, sweetest born on earth,
Went from me, scarcely can I look on sky,
Or cloud, or babbling brook, or gentle flower,
But her I seem to see, and hear but her,
And yet can reach her not. In vain, in vain !
All beauty in the earth and in the air
Hath voice to tell me only of my loss ;
And I grow weary of the sun and sky.

“The violet grows upon her grave, and green
Wave grasses o'er her, and the daisy weeps
Its trembling tears into her heart, and I
Can scarce look on them but my tears fall too.
For she was tender as the flower that blooms
In dews of May, and scents the passing breeze :
Aye, she was stately as the foxglove fair,
And she was chaste as is the lily white
That looks upon its image in the pool,
And good and kindly unto all that breathes :
And she was more than fame or wealth to me :
And when I laid her in the cold, cold earth,
Beside our kindred in the ancient tomb,
My heart, my heart was buried with her there !

“Yet will I go ; for she whose soul was knit
With mine in hope and counsel, sweetest boon,

Besought me with her latest breath to seek,
If haply I might see, the wondrous gem,
And gain the vision of the Holy Grail,
Which whoso sees is ever after blest.
And tho' unworthy all, yet will I go :
And for her sake will seek, perchance will find
For her sake what I dare not hope nor dream
Of finding for my own. Unworthy I
To go on such a quest, where heart impure
And thought all earthly may not hope to find."

The mists curled from the valleys as he went,
The rabbits peered and scurried o'er the green,
And close the pert crow followed at the heel
Of peasant early ploughing in his croft ;
While birds, nest-building, ever sang or flew
With tiny morsel for the nest they built ;
And fair the trees in distance touched the sky.
His mind went roaming o'er the happy past,
Filled with its tale of deeds when life was gay,
And all that chanced was as a blithesome game
Of eager holiday. Ah, once before
That path he traversed, and he brought his bride
Even by that dingle to her wedded home,
On palfrey close beside him, eye on eye,
Save when the horses started, pricking ear,
At any sudden rustling in the green.
He knew he carried there the sweetest prize
Knight ever won. Ah, then 'twas bliss to breathe,
To feel the sun, to wanton with the wind,
Or front the tempest's wrath ! But now, but now,
Nought lay before of hope. Yet would he go
And seek, redressing every wrong he saw,
With knightly duty in far distant lands.

And as he rode, descending o'er a down
That slipt by bits of woodland to a thorp,
Set softly round in hollow dip, green-fringed,
Red-roofed and blushing to the early sun,
As early smoke rose straight into the blue,
A man came forth, half-clad, and begged of him
Some help for love of God.

But good Sir Guy,
Absorbed in thought, heard not, but hurried on.
The beggar's eyes looked hungry after him.
"So grand a knight," he said, "and yet no need
Hath he of pity for the weak and poor,
Not even a word or look of sympathy :
Tho', certes, he did not look glad or gay,
As fits a knight on quest. Maybe he heard not.
Ah, well, well, well ! Indeed they doubly give
Who give for God, and *seek* His suffering poor,
To win back peace such as no worldling knows :
And, troth, for this they need not wander far :
It may be worse for those who, having, hold,
Than for the beggar who solicits dole."

And good Sir Guy rode on, nor looked behind :
Once started, he was eager for the goal
As making up time lost, and, day by day,
His courage grew, as more and more he felt
His soul was consecrate by love and loss,
Above his consecration as the knight,
And knew that purity did grow within
As more he brooded on that love and loss.
And in the Holy Land in burning sun,
Or 'mid the driving storm, he fought and bled :
And men spoke proudly of his daring deeds,
And favour won he of the great and small ;

And minstrels sang his praises o'er the earth,
And little children named him in their song,
And brightened as they sang of good Sir Guy,
Because of old he was the children's friend.

For once when he on knightly deeds intent,
Rode on, by blooming hedges, as he sang
A lively lay of love, he heard a wail
As from a child o'ercome of agony.
And, reining in his steed, and listening hard,
He guessed from whence the piteous sounds had come;
And, at one leap, he took the fence, and made
Straight for the spot; and there, indeed, he saw
A sight that moved him to the uttermost:
A man in garb of noble, brawny broad,
And tall in just proportion, held a child,
Half-naked, by the neck, and with a whip
Laid stroke on stroke upon the body bare,
While close beside there panting lay a girl,
Her garments tattered, stained. "Hold, hold," cried he
While yet he was almost a stone's-throw off,
"I charge you by the oath I took as knight
To our great Master to defend the weak,
And succour all who suffer wrong like these,
That ye do answer as ye ought for this."

The man looked up with scornful, bloodshot eye,
And said, "I wot ye know not what I am:
Know I am lord of Overdene, and do
That which I will within my own domain.
These brats have come within my pleasancess
In search of flowers, they say—more like to steal,
Or spy upon me and have done me wrong;
And thus I treat all trespassers in these,
For I reserve them for myself alone."

"O caitiff in the garb of overlord,
Shame on ye that ye speak in such a wise,"
Said good Sir Guy, and his fair face was stern :
"Ye do not answer as ye ought in this.
The wrong was little, and the children knew
Not they did wrong, but wandered thoughtlessly ;
And ye have done but as the wild beast might,
And not as man informed of reason should,
And torn and ravined where kind word were best."

And then, dismounting from his steed, he charged
The lord to draw his weapon, and they fought ;
And, as they fought, the steed that lingered near
Would whinny as he heard the clash of steel,
And, looking on, the children cried anew
To see the combat, and the blood that flowed,
As weapons flashed, like lightnings in the air :
For both were trained in sword-craft, and the lord
Was heavier, longer-reaching than Sir Guy.
But at the last, in making fiercer thrust
Than any gone before, the lord's foot slipped :
Sir Guy's quick eye that lost no chance served well :
He darted forward, pricked him in the neck,
And blood gushed and he fell. And then Sir Guy
Put foot upon him, and he said, "I will
That ye do that which I require of you :
I am Sir Guy of Devon, and demand
That ye go with me to the Abbey Frant ;
That ye put treasure in the Abbot's hand
To found a home for orphans of the poor
Thro' widest Devon or in Somerset.
That must ye do, or ye must surely die."

At that the lord looked up, with widening eyes,
Slow shake of head intent, and thus spoke slow

Between his hard-drawn breaths : " Are ye indeed
Sir Guy of Devon ? I have heard of him
As one of those who never yet took sword
But surely overcame his adversary.
I am not shamed as shamed I might have been
By yielding to a man less brave than thou,
And seeing now you have me under heel,
And I must bow me to a better man,
That which you ask of me that will I do
When that my wound hath been a little stanch'd."

And good Sir Guy, as that lord's word was given,
Like noble knight that is full kindly too,
When he had seen the children cheered and gone,
Gave aid to bear him to his castled keep,
And helped to stanch the wounds and bind them up
As tenderly as woman trained of hand ;
For gentleness is part of chivalry,
And pity follows soon for him who yields.

And after, this bad lord of Overdene,
Moved by that courteous kindness of the knight
As well as smitten by his bravery,
Took thought of all the ill that he had done,
Became the bosom-friend of good Sir Guy,
And oft went with him on his quests abroad :
Atoning as he might for errors past,
And restful in the thought that he had won
A higher joy than watching his demesne,
And wreaking pain on those that strayed therein.
Such virtue is in knightly action fair
To bring repentance, hatred of the vile,
To make men hate that in them which was vile,
And joy in striving evil to undo.

And when the wife of good Sir Guy passed on
To that calm kingdom where there is no strife,
This lord would raise a fair memorial,
And built a school and called it by her name.

And once a year, when wild-flowers were in blow,
And hyacinths in woody grove threw sky
On quickening earth, and waving buttercups
And gentle daisies, with their eyes of gold,
Made meadows gay, as lambkins skipped and played
About their dams, he made a little feast,
And bade the children come; and there they roved
In that demesne, which erstwhile was accurst,
In that it bloomed for one alone; and joyous cries
And shoutings gay were heard o'er all the fields
Till set of sun: and he amidst them moved
With eye of joy, and many a jest he made
To please the strong; and in his arms would take
The stricken—sick, or lame, or sorely maimed—
And pull them flowers: and Overdene indeed
Seemed turned into a garden of delight;
And this he called the Children's Festival,
Or Day of Good Sir Guy, in gratitude
That he was changed, and loved the children too.

So good deeds grow, and root themselves afresh
In distant soils as carried of the winds,
Even as the seeds of wild-flowers pass and strike.

And one, a bard, had made a little song
Of how Sir Guy had brought the orphans help,
And children sang it often as they went
Upon the way, and blessed him as they sang.



The good Sir Guy he was our friend :

He roved thro' all the land,
And gallantly he fought for us
With his bright-flashing brand.

Oh, none so bold but he would face
Who worked the children woe,
And none could his swift charge withstand,
Nor meet his doughty blow.

Oh, high his plume that danced in air—
Serene and calm his look :
But stern he was when wrong was done,
And no wrong would he brook !

He loved the children of the poor,
And oft would stoop and kiss :
Oh, who would not love good Sir Guy,
The knight, for doing this ?

A scornful look, a haughty word
On us the great cast down,
But good Sir Guy he fought for us,
And we Sir Guy would crown.

The Master bade the children come,
When His disciples frowned ;
And good Sir Guy his Master serves,
And we would have him crowned !

The children's crown, who oft with tears
Had washed the flowers, and red
Dropped on them from their wounds, we'd bring
And put it on his head.

Oh, high his plume that waves in air
As his good steed comes on ;
There's none like good Sir Guy for us,
Who has our battle won.

Oh, blessings on the good Sir Guy
Who's gone to Holy Land :
All good be with him from on high,
And give him visions grand :

For he is meek and pure and true,
The first of all the train ;
God bless him, whereso'er he go,
And bring him back again.

And now, as then, Sir Guy had nobly sought
For knightly venture ; but he did not see
The Holy Grail, nor vision fair, and deemed
His own unworthiness had proved his doom.
Yet most he mourned for sake of her who sent
Him forth, with her last breath, on this emprise ;
And back he rode, disconsolate and sore
At heart for love of her, and humbly fain
To find some comfort in good deeds at home
Among the poor he knew, who served and worked
About the lands that alway had been his :
Resolved to tend more faithfully God's poor,
As she had hinted in her last sweet words,
Which now came to him stronger than before.

Once more he neared the little thorp that lay
Hid in the hollow, with the downs above,
Now sparkling in the heats of Summer sun :
The wild-flowers set, like jewels, in the green ;
And limes and sycamores, and eglantine
And woodbine high, made sweet the wind
About it as he came. And good Sir Guy,
His heart uplift with thankfulness to see
Once more his beauteous Devon, with its thorps,
Its bounteous greenery, its lanes and all

Its orchards spreading fair, could not but let
A prayer rise to his lips that God would grant
His later life more blessed in good might be
Than any former time. And as he prayed
He raised his eyes, and there before him lay,
Prone on the green, with hollow sunken eye,
The beggar he had passed when forth he fared.

“For love of God, good knight, pray succour me !
I faint, I die ; for weary weeks have passed
Since I have eaten what my nature craved ;
And even the boon of water, now denied,
Might soothe my lips, for parched they are, and burn.”

And good Sir Guy dismounted from his steed,
And made a pillow of his cloak, and took
The sufferer in his arms, and gently laid
The weary head upon it. Then he spied
A little iron cup, and took, and went,
With eager footstep, to a brooklet near,
And filled the cup with water, and ran back
And held it to the parched lips ; and lo !
As now he looked, while yet the poor man drank
Refreshed, it brightened, blushes, reddening, stole
Around it, till his eyes could scarcely bear
The brightness, and he felt adaze ; then ran
Adown it, deeply flushing it, the dye
Of blood, the Holy Blood ; and now Sir Guy
Could look upon it, and could see the gem,
Like rainbow pulsate on an Autumn sky
When fruitful mists are trembling in the air,
Rich, many-coloured as if sunlight glow
Burnt in it, and was glad. He kissed the man
Who lay, half-clad, beside him ; took in hand

The wondrous gem, and drank from out it too:
For thro' his wonder he was much athirst.
He thanked his God that he had seen the sight,
And all his being glow'd. And straight he went
Down to the village, where he paid to have
The poor man well-bestowed. Once more came back
His dreams of knightly deed, and rapt desire
To cherish those on whom God's burden lay,
With vision of the Grail forever clear ;
And by such deeds he built a fame that lives
Even now, and ne'er will die ; for that he saw
At last, near home, the wondrous Cup, and learned
That all of personal pain indeed may be
Transfigured in the service done for Christ ;
That glory waits on duty near at hand,
Which well-done brings the vision of the Lord.

[*The Sun Mag.*]

II.

TELEMACHUS THE MONK.

(WRITTEN FOR RECITATION.)

IN the Libyan desert, remote, unknown,
Dwelt a monk, who to save his soul had flown
From the sins of the City; and there he prayed
For the grace of Christ that he might be made
A witness, a martyr, and so secure
The blessing pronounced on those, heart pure,
Who seek hard service, and even would die
To commend the Gospel to low and high.
And oft as he sat by his hut and read
Strange fancies went and came in his head
Of clouds, and thunders, and voices, and fire,
And plague, and earthquake, and battle dire,
And tumult, and hurry, and darkness and dread,
And the marching of armies with awful tread,
And showers of blood making green earth red;
Till the sky was like brass, and the sun like blood,
And the moon like a molten ball on a flood
Of flame that floated, and burnt the clouds
As it touched, like the flame in a burnt ship's shrouds;
And sudden, looking up, he would hear a cry
As of men that in tortures of burning die.
And oft, as he lay asleep on the floor,
Such dreams would come: and then followed a roar
As of furnace flames; and strange faces wild—
Contorted and terrible, sin-defiled,—
Ranged row on row in their terraced tiers,

Looked down on men with swords and spears,
That fought with each other, and mocked the pain
That came with the wounds renewed again,
Till the one would fall, transfixed complete,
And the other exult in his foe's defeat ;
While, with grin of demons, the rest looked on,
And applauded the deed that he had done.
Telemachus—such was the hermit's name—
Had heard of the orgies of Roman fame,—
Of the circus sports, of the heathen fights,
Of the gladiatorial delights,
That the men and women of Rome enjoyed,
When the tortures of Christians were not employed.

One night to this hermit a vision came
Of a man whose head was encircled of flame :
His long beard was white, and his eyes were clear,
And he looked as if he had ne'er known fear ;
And he said : " It needs but a martyr true
To make end of such scenes ; and I come to you,
Who here, in the desert, would keep your soul
Secure in the road to the heavenly goal :
But a shorter road to the goal may be found
By him who for Christ would be early crowned :
Go forward to Rome, and make no delay,
There find out the circus, and boldly say,
' In the name of Christ, and the curse to waive,
Desist from your sins your souls to save,
And your city from ruin of fire and sword,
For thus saith Jehovah, the Christians' Lord !'
And I, who of old in dim Patmos saw
The wonderful visions, inspiring awe,
Over all your labours will watch and guard,
And see that you fail not of your reward."

The Monk Telemachus at once obeyed,
In the garb of the hermit still arrayed,
And he bore nor purse, nor scrip, nor cloak—
Well observing the apostolic yoke,—
And along the road that he had to go
Were clusters of men passing onward, slow :
There were Nubians tall and thoughtful of mien,
And men from Egypt, with blacks between,
And Armenians grave, and Grecians proud
That now under lash of the Roman bowed ;
There were Jews that at certain hours of the day
Turned round to the point where Jerusalem lay,
Laid reverent hands on their breasts, and prayed
With eyes turned to heaven, all undismayed :
For Rome was mighty, and all men knew
That from farthest climes she wanderers drew.

And the monk to such as he could told true
Of the Cross, and the wonders that it would do,
And of Christ that for all men bled and died,
And now lived in heaven, the glorified,
To intercede for all sinners' sin,
And for those who believed a place to win
In the heaven of the blest to which He had gone,
And in midst of which is the great white throne.
But the Jews stood aloof with a high disdain,
And the men from Egypt were always fain
To tell that 'twas all in their creed of old,
From whence the Jews had got wealth untold
Of thought and life and the sense divine
Of the One God working thro' all—His sign ;
And the body's claims tho' it died when the soul
Had passed—to reclaim it at distant goal.

And the haughty Romans would stand aside,
And listen and smile with an air of pride—
With the cold toleration that weighs and waits,
As if all were explained by abnormal states—
Or the fine delusions of minds diseased
By nor law of reason nor sense appeased.

So day by day they went journeying on
In the flaming sun, till at last they won
First sight of Rome as it glistening lay
In the brilliant glow of a Summer's day :
And they passed the Palace of Cæsars grand,
And Forum and Capitol as they stand,
With their air of repose and of high command ;
The marble towers, and the domes of gold
Like lesser suns in their spheres hung bold,
Reflecting their light on the buildings far,
And having their trains of moon and star.
And when they came to the spacious streets
Telemachus wondered, as when one meets
Some grand revelation of Nature's might
In forest or sea-cave or thunderous light.
He looked on the columns statue-crowned,
On the temples fair, carven all around,
With their pillared fronts and their endless frieze,
And the heads of the gods with their calm and ease.
For he saw great Jove on his pillar stand,
And Vulcan, the thunderbolt in his hand,
And Bacchus gay with the vine crowned free,
And the thyrsus, his symbol of sovereignty ;
Pomona and Flora with flowers and fruit ;
And Silenus, dreamful, did play the lute ;
And proud Mars arrayed in his armour clear,

And Minerva stately with globe and spear,
And Diana hunting, all void of fear :
The Amazons fought their eternal fight
Alike in the daytime and in the night ;
And with trident, old Neptune ruled the sea
As he rode in his chariot with majesty ;
And fair Venus sprang from the snow-white foam,
And Nereids danced in their glistening home ;
In the sun all the fountains sparkled cool ;
And the Tritons glimmered within the pool,
And they blew their shells as o'er ocean old,
To calm the storms in their twilight hold ;
And the she-wolf suckled the twins again
On the tops of the palaces free from pain ;—
Till our good monk's eyes could not bear the light
And shrank from the beauty with sense of blight :
He thought of the end that was all in all,
And the glory was shrouded as with a pall.

Tho' sad, faint, and weary, and travel-sore,
Strangest waves of strength our monk upbore,
Borne in by the spirit of grace that makes
The weaker ones strong for the others' sakes :
And without any pause he found his way
To the great Colosseum, round and grey ;
And he entered in as free as the air,
And two gladiators he saw there ;
Their short swords gleamed in their hands as they
came,
And the light on their helmets looked like flame.
He elbowed his way to the barrier then,
And leaped it, and stood right between the men,
Full mailed and armed for blood and for death,
And, smote with surprise, they held their breath

For a moment, as he all-earnest pled,
In the name of Christ, that no blood be shed.

And one set on high, and looked wanton-eyed,
At the first glanced curious; and then aside
He leaned to his trusted friends, and said,
"What means the fool? Let them take his head—
He doth set small store by the gift of life
Who doth put himself with our joys at strife."
And, signal given, the audience wide
Turned thumbs, and "Down with the madman" cried;
And great stones were cast on the monk, who bore
All meekly, amid the loud sea-like roar.

The two men glared while the monk had spoke,
Then their eyes met o'er him, and keen awoke
The fire of their passion for blood and fame;
And towards each other they springing came.
And again Telemachus rushed between,
Crying "Jesus commands"; but the sudden sheen
Of their swords flashed o'er him, and down he fell,
Deep-pierced to the heart, in a trickling well
Of his blood, and lay while they strove amain,
And at last one died; and the victor fain
Laid him down by the side of the monk, and made
A picture which moved not a few, 'tis said.

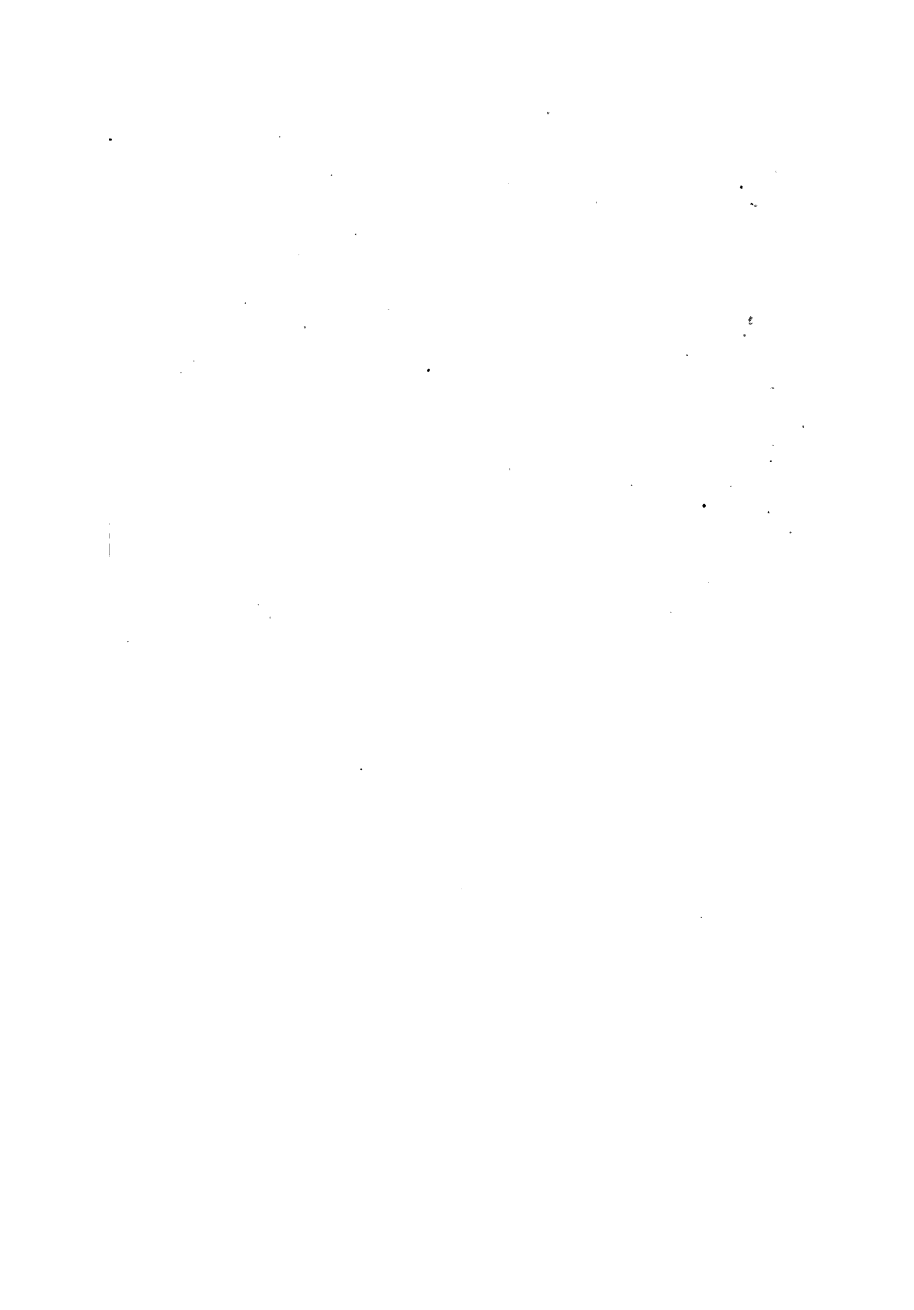
And the monk was mightiest in his death—
With a prophet's power in his latest breath,—
And he died the victor; for never again
Did the life-blood of gladiator stain
The arena—that was the last grim fight
Of the gladiators in Roman sight:
For Honorius heard of the monk's high deed,
And an end to the circus was straight decreed.

No service is worked for the Lord in vain—
No jewel is lost but is found again ;
For the wandering sheep the Shepherd yearns,
And rests not, until the lost returns :
And the name of Telemachus will aye
Be held in high honour while Jesus' sway
Grows more and more as the ages glide,
And the Saints are gathered unto His side.

Sept. 25, 1878.

IV.

SONNETS.



GREAT POETS.

I.—BURNS.

A KEEN eye bent upon the objects near,
And laughter twinkling round it in the light,
With memories ranging thickly, dark or bright ;
And ever close by laughter lies the tear.
Oft in extremes, yet knowing nought of fear,
He passes swiftly onward, fain for right,
Yet sharp condemning in his own despite,
And turning all to music, sweet and clear.
Enough for him to breathe the common air ;
His genius turned it into music true—
Enrancing-lyric, rich, and ever new :
Familiar yet most strange and naively fair :
His songs, dramatic-varied, as life's tale :
Love, wit, and humour in their turn prevail.

II.—COLERIDGE.

THE sound of flutes that comes with soft surprise
Upon a stranger on an island fair ;
Who dreams that sylphs and sirens shelter there,
And holds his breath to list, and lifts his eyes
To seek the spot where that sweet singer lies ;
Embowered of rose and poppy, perfumed rare ;
But finds it not, even tho' the ambient air
Thrills with the notes that float and fall and rise.
Our mage of poets, Coleridge, art thou—
A halo softening o'er the archèd brow ;
While sweet as fall of rose-leaves come thy notes ;
A radiance is about thee as of morn :
Around thy head a dimmer aureole floats
To tell the sainthood to which thou wast born.

III.—WORDSWORTH.

LIKE to the lofty hills he loved so well—
Broad-based and rocky, oft with crown of snow,
On which the light plays with transfiguring glow,
At eve or morn, or in the west wind's swell.
But cold in the ascent, as travellers tell,
And hard, though, in the clefts as on they go,
They find the fairest of all flowers that blow,
And nod their welcome to the searching gale.
And down below, full-mirrored in the lake,
A softer image of the hills lies fair—
Less rugged, rocky, and less hard and bare.
Thy fancy, Wordsworth, sought the upper air;
Thy judgment with excess would ever break,
And joy from sorrow secret tribute take.

IV.—SCOTT.

HE moves serene among his fellow-men,
And notes the fun and fancy as he goes;
He is not one to seek refined repose,
Nor hurry o'er the ground he treads again.
The poet of the times when men were fain
For clashing combat with their doughty foes—
The charge, the wrestle, and the fiercer close:
With plumes and sword-play, and the heaps of slain.
A modern Homer, with a heart content;
A knight of old come back in modern guise:
No problems vex him: he but waits event;
Enough for him the onset and the prize,
And time to sing the action—glittering play
Of swords, like lightnings, on the mountain way.

V.—SHELLEY.

THE odour of a rose : light of a star :
The essence of a flame blown on by wind,
That lights and warms all near it, bland and kind,
But aye consumes itself, as though at war
With what supports and feeds it ;—from afar
It draws its life, but evermore inclined
To leap into the flame that makes men blind
Who seek the secret of all things that are.
Such wert thou, Shelley, bound for airiest goal :
Interpreter of quintessential things :
Who mounted ever up on eagle-wings
Of phantasy : had aimed at heaven and stole
Promethean fire for men to be as gods,
And dwell in free, aerial abodes.

VI.—BYRON.

LIKE thunder, fed by lightning, was thy voice ;
Or giant sword from sheath withdrawn to play
With blinding brightness o'er the common way,
And make men wonder, fear, and then rejoice.
The elemental awful was thy choice :
Thou found'st the night of nature as the day ;
And storm like calm where mightier powers have sway
Light in eclipse thy daring muse employs.
Byron, thou art the voice of driving storm
And lurid tempest, which all things transform
Even by the shadows that they cast abroad :
Within thy heart thou had'st a fearful charm
As of the earthquake, or of Titan god
That walks the mountain with uplifted arm.

VII.—KEATS.

LIKE fabled faun surprised amid the shade
Of stately trees that whisper to the wind—
And ever steals a lingering look behind,
As onward moves he watching for the naiad,
The nymph, and palpitating, half-afraid,
Half-joyful, trembling, all his conscious mind
Suffused by dreamy airs, that sweetly bind
His fancy to the earth he still must tread.
The fountains gleam with life ; the forest-trees
Are tranced figures in a dream of men
That sprang from gods ; the gentle breeze
Is full of whispers of sweet deities :
The groves are temples, mountain-tops again
Are altars, and around the nymph-like train.

VIII.—LANDOR.

LIKE crowned athlete that in a race has run,
And points his finger at those left behind,
And follows on his way as now inclined,
With song and laughter in the glowing sun ;
And joys at that which he hath joyous done :
And, like a child, will wanton with the wind,
And pluck the flowers his radiant brows to bind—
Re-crown himself as conscious he hath won.
And still regardless of his fellow-men
He follows on his road intent and fain
To please himself, and caring not to gain
The world's applause which he might seek in vain :
A soldier, yet would, careless, sport and play
And leave the reckoning for a distant day.

IX.—CARLYLE.

EYES fixed on distance where there looms a star,
New-risen thro' fog, which fain he would make
clear ;

And now he moves disdainful of the near,
With scorn for all who will not look afar,
Nor see his star new risen : with those at war

He waxes keener, and he knows no fear—
Proclaims them blind : himself the chosen seer :
And soon no cloud his radiant orb shall mar.

Intent he gazes, makes his record fair,
With labour glorious for his fellow-men,
And when his star swims inward on their ken,
He scorns their praises as before their blame :
Still other stars demand intenser care,
And Heaven rewards with further work—not fame.

X.—TENNYSON.

THE soft enchanting light that, wavering, lays
A charm on English garden in the noon,
When all is still, and but the goldcrest's tune
Is heard in softer bursts about the ways :

And all is wrapped in sweet and dreamy haze
Born of the warmth, that is a welcome boon—
More welcome when the birds shall waken soon
And shake the censers of the limes and bays.
While round shall rise the sound of work and stir—
The voice of busy men in field and grove,
All mellowed by the distance ; and the bells
Send out their chime that ever softly tells
How life beats out for each ; and sweet is love—
Sweet as the coo of dove in yonder fir.

XI.—BROWNING.

THE seer, with forehead to the far blue sky,
And sense of the divine that works thro' all,
And human will that downward aye can call
The far divine to fill the human eye.
And careful of the cause : the perverse tie
Of motive : puzzling mazes where there fall
For ever chequered light and shade withal
To show divinest purpose, mystery.
And men thro' men, as lights thro' prisms that play,
He painted, strong in truth, as one that shared
All impulse, passion, motives that men sway,
As in the past ; and with his subjects paired,
And found the secret ; so he forward fared—
A fighter—further on than yesterday.

XII.—SWINBURNE.

A DARING rider, on high-mettled steed,
With scorn of beaten roads and open ways,
He hurries on by field and wood, nor stays
To choose, and others' cries will hardly heed.
And warming as he goes, sometimes indeed
It seems as tho' he even yields and plays,
And gives his steed free rein, and scarce betrays
Control, as though to chance he left the lead.
But as he goes he ever carols clear
Some song so piercing sweet that men will cry :
" O pause and pass not swiftly from our eye,
And let the music home within our ear."
But, like the flash of sword in dewy light,
He courses onward thro' the day and night.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

A NORTHERN skald come to a newer day :
A later Chaucer that will sweet unfold
The life, the loves, the passions of times old :
Greek, Roman, Norse, with lighter roundelay.
About his genius, ever flitting, play
The winds of soft romance, and manifold
Fair fancies that the eyelids open hold,
Even if the dreamy music would waylay
With charmèd sleep the sense of reader, fain
To share with him the joy, and e'en the pain
Of soft regrets that all the past is past ;
And yet along his honeyed line is cast
The sense of needed action thus to gain
Fruits from "an empty day" that long may last.
Sept. 1, 1892.

DANTE G. ROSSETTI.

SON of the Middle-age, re-born in ours,
With cloistral love of solitude, and fain
To brood o'er lovely forms, yet no disdain
Of ruder life emerging. Radiant hours
Bring newer hopes to him, with equal powers
To range the symbols, and to pause again
Intent before the glories that remain,
And rise to worship as the fancy towers.
Poet-painter mystic, with a sense divine
Of symbol in things daily seen and known ;
Who, looking upward, saw not skies alone
But "Blessed Damosels," with sweet incline
Of head to earth and passion nursed of Heaven,
With starry haloes of the mystic Seven.
Sept. 1, 1892.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

SWEET singer of the time of flowing frill,
Of patches, wigs and wit, and stately pose,
And graceful minuets, and measured bows,
And Beau Brocades with various art and skill.

Beneath the finery the heart's faint thrill
Is seen to stir when soft the music blows :
Thy genius gives to all the point, the close
Imagination only can fulfil.

Thy touch, tho' light, shows sense of life full keen,
And gentlest pathos makes thy airy line
Glow brighter, like the sun that stirs in wine
Which, mellowing, long hath in the shadow been.
Thy laughter naif and lightsome, low and rare,
Takes tribute from deep thought half hidden there.
Sept. 1, 1892.

THEODORE WATTS.

HIS eye is lit with lovely fantasies :
He moves in realms of grace, and welcome there :
His thoughts are of the kingdoms in which fare
Sweet souls that rise, thro' will, to ecstasies.

He dotes on dreams that are like prophecies
Of fairer life—chaste fancies high and rare—
Eternal sunshine and the radiant air
That live alone within the poet's eyes.

High-thoughted singer, careful of the form,
Reserved and clear in every touch and turn,
Yet in whose rhythmic lines comes hint of storm
Long past, and stiller calm that once did burn
The fire of passion keen. His art doth own
The sonnet—sky with starlights softly sown.
Sept. 2, 1892.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON.

(*Obiit* Oct. 6, 1892.)

I.—FAREWELL.

NOT Time himself hath power to weaken thee ;
Nor Death to rob us of thy gift of song ;
They both must serve, and faithfully prolong
Thy service, as they keep thy memory.

O poet-master, our farewells shall be
Not sad, but chastened, else we do thee wrong,
Forgetting thy desire in that sweet song
That craved no moaning when thou putt'st to sea.

As light of fallen stars unto our sphere
All tremulous travels constant age on age ;
So shall thy death be bounteous presage
Of broader light and knowledge, quelling fear,
Till fuller sun rolls in "the Golden Year,"
And men read freely in God's ample page.

II.—HIS FUNERAL IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

(Oct. 12, 1892.)

WHILE with funereal pomp they buried him
In that proud pile where English kings do lie,
I read how sweet Elaine did love and die—
How Arthur passed,—until my eyes grew dim.

Then seemed it as tho' on my ears did swim
The sound of organ-chorus swelling high,
Wed to "Immortal Love" in harmony—
A music matching well his wondrous hymn.
And "Love Immortal" seemed with me to bide,
And shed a radiance on my reverent mood,
And, thro' the mist, shot sunshine by my side,
With blessed foretastes of all fair and good.

And tho' I was not with the mourners there,
In his high obsequies I took my share.

A DREAM.

(AFTER A VISIT TO EXHIBITION OF MR. FLEMING PETER'S
RELICS FROM TEL-EL-AHNA.)

I WALKED within a city strangely fair,
Compact of statues, palaces that showed
Fronts glimmering as tho' gems there quivering glowed
In lines of lotus, and in networks rare :
And temples in which clouds of incense were
Slow curling upward, and far ever flowed
The sounds of adoration : richly strowed
With fine devices floor and wall and stair.
And when I saw the light on vine-leaves play,
Free wrought on pillars ; and on columns high,
Built as of reeds compact, with inscript stay,
Rare birds engraven as in act to fly :
Saw hands outstretcht to Sun's rays streaming down,—
I knew I was in Khuenaten's town.

Sept. 24, 1892.

II.

[A stele oft-repeated shows Khuenaten on his throne, his
wife, Nefert-iti, on his knee, one child on his hand,
another on her arm.]

UPON a tablet, as I passed along
I saw the King sit on his throne, and make
Throne of his knee for her who did partake
In all his honour, glory, word and song.
And they again for children, sweet and strong,
Made throne of arm and hand ; and for their sake
The throne grew grander, as their love did wake
Fair echoes in the hearts of all the throng—
That lookt enrapt. And I indeed with them
Bent knee in reverence with a heart on flame.
"Living in Truth" was on the throne engraven ;
Sun's rays above made glory of their own,
That, palpitating, seemed to beat and leaven
The place, and wholly sanctified the throne.

III.

I N temple Nefert-iti looked in calm,
With trancèd eye on symbol loved and known,
With sunbeam glory o'er her on the throne :
Beside her carven reed and stately palm.
And statues soft repeated features fair
From far around until the charmèd stone
Did seem a living human soul to own,
And breast to gently heave on that still air.
And sounds of music soft went wandering there
'Mid colours choice on cornice and on roof,
As though the very light did form a woof
For magic textures woven out of air :
On painted frescoes wavered light and shade
In sweet exchange as Art has ever made.
Sept. 26, 1892.

IV.

I SAW processions of fair damsels come
Before their Queen and bearing offerings sweet,
And flowers of lotus scattered at her feet,
With rich perfumes, and heard the mystic hum
Of praise far-chanted by a choir unseen,
To which they answered in tones low and meet,
Then fell before the rays in bliss complete,
Adoring in one act their god and Queen.
The while the King with hands outstretcht adores
The wondrous Sun's rays streaming down on him,
And making glory on the painted floors
Till all above with incense waxes dim
And dimmer ; and, like dream, the scene fades down,
And darkness falls on Khuenaten's town.
Sept. 26, 1892.

A DREAM OF ANGLERS.

[In acknowledgment of T. Westwood's *Chronicle of the "Compleat Angler,"* and Bi-centenary Sonnets from Mrs. Brotherton.]

*Isaak, I see, intent on mead and down—
On piping throats and on blossomed spray;
But Elia's face is turned another way,
Drawn by the roar and tumult of the town.
Yet did they meet, in sooth, those twain, what speech
Could gauge the gladness in the heart of each.*

From 7th Bi-centenary Sonnet, beginning:

"Two great and good men oft have trod your ground,
Old 'Totnam Hill.'"

I.

OH, as I read these gems I fell on dream,
And off thro' pleasant pastures swift I hied
(Far from this foggy London where I'm tied),
And on to wander by a purling stream;—
Where dart the golden tench, barbel, and bream,
And silvery roach that in the shadows glide;
And oft, when sunset brings its golden pride,
Rise, purple-lustrous in the flickering beam.
And there, with rod in hand, I soon espied
Two come toward me wondrous sweet of mien,
Discoursing as they went, and one applied
His hand to hail me; and I stood between
The two who talked, and told me many a tale
Of Lea and "Totnam Hill" and fair Dove Dale.

II.

And as we went in sweet discourse, there came
A fourth of soberer aspect, yet he smiled
On each, and asked such questions as beguiled
The way, with flitting lights of humorous flame.
At which we smiled. "Not of our craft nor name,
And yet thou look'st familiar—whence com'st
thou?"

"Yes, of the craft," said he, "for I avow
In Izaak there sweet counsellor I claim :
And if I fish not in these streams,—I know
Fair waters for a pensive man to seek ;—
And when I drop my hook am sure to hit
On shining prize,—and kindle with a glow
Of fine success" : and Izaak answered meek ;
"I know thee, Elia, by thy playful wit."

III.

And Elia laughed, and spoke not for a while—
And then, with knowing nod, he said, "I know
To touch,—as if I loved him,—tender,—slow,—
The living bait that one would fain beguile
To tickling wonder,—sweetened by my wile,—
Before I would in further waters throw,—
Where many fish be waiting down below—
'Tis them I fain would draw by art and toil.
And patiently I angle—day by day—
And throw my bait with daintiest of floats ;
And—when, on swifter streams, I often play
My coloured flies—while fancy fondly dotes,—
And joyful land my fish,—I always say—
'Exactly, that is Master Izaak's way.'

IV.

And when we reached "the Fishing House" indeed
Full rich repast there was for all in store;
For Izaak drew from Elia more and more
Of humorous play, and did not fail in meed
Of lighter thought to give the current speed;
And Cotton capped good Elia's jokes right fain,
With serious mirth, and many a little train
Of fancies quaint that fit the angler's creed.
And so the talk from grave to gay ran on,
With draughts of sweetest ale man ever drew;
And all agreed good Elia *must* be one
Of our fair craft; and Elia smiled anew,
Rose as to speak, but—knocked a tankard down—
Which woke me, and, alas! I was in town.

AT MONTROSE.—I.

SCENE of my school-days—Mount of Roses then *
In very truth, as youth alone could know—
From lofty church-tower to the sands below
Radiant with light beyond the power of pen.
And now I gaze, with saddened joy, again
On stately street and statues in the glow
Of softened sunlight, thinking as I go
Of those who walked with me ; and not in vain.
And some have passed, and some have wandered far,
And some have found their rest and joy at home,
Not seeking wealth or fame in distant land.
Perchance the wiser they ; for those that roam
Lose gaining ; hot ambitions ever war
With tenderer feelings and the helpful hand.

II.—ON THE LINKS.

THE Links ! The Links ! how sweet to trace
Anew the records writ of old,
By famous golfers, as they "holed,"
With dexterous skill from place to place,
With all the keenness of swift race ;
The rarest drives, the "puttings" bold,
The "click-strokes" pen could ne'er unfold ;
Dow's dash ; the glow on Petrie's face ;
Paton's long drives ; More-Gordon's skill
To pass all free from whins or ill
Of gully, and the winds to use
Tho' contrary, and well peruse
The elements and make them tide
The ball even to the "put"-hole's side.

* Said to be the old Latin name of Montrose—Mons rosarum, Mount of Roses. The motto of the town is "Mare ditat, rosa decorat"—the sea enriches, the rose adorns ; more poetical at all events than the derivation from the Celtic Munross—the red bog.

III.—THE "OLD SALTS."

AND there they stood, the mariners old,
On that green mound, and oft have I
Perused with them the starry sky,
Or white sails on the ocean told.
Aye, there they stood, brown, wrinkled, bold
To tell of feats of devilry,
Or rarest deeds of chivalry
Unlinking slowly fold by fold.
With telescope in hand the while,
And pausing as they chewed to spit,
They'd spin their yarns, as was most fit,
And slowly-sliding hours beguile.
A tough old race with nerves of steel,
Keen hiding what they most did feel.

IV.—THE "OLD SALTS."

THEY all are gone : and none now gaze
Thro' telescope on waters far,
Slow-guessing what the vessels are,
Or where they go their ocean ways.
Another race has all the praise,
With less of leisure for the war
Of wordy strife that left no scar,
Tho' sometimes strangers stood amaze
At phrases less select than strong :
Aye, other times bring other ways
E'en for the old, and not for long
Such custom holds, although its praise
By many pens has been besung,
Or found its meed in Laureate's lays.

V.—THE CRICKET-GROUND.

AND there our boyish cricket-ground,
 Where oft at early morn we played,
 And "hits" and "runs" we thoughtless made
 Within the sad sea's hollow sound.
 Not seldom balls driven out of bound
 Were in the "bent"-grass hidden laid,
 And "lost," and all the search essayed,
 Till, with loud shouts, the lost was found.
 The sad sea murmurs as of old ;
 But others now pace out the ground—
 A happy band with looks so bold
 And eager, with fresh hopes fair-crowned :
 Ah me ! my heart tells I am old
 And strange in once familiar bound.

VI.—ON THE CHAIN-BRIDGE.

AND this the bridge I paced of old—
 How often, when the moonlight lay
 Softened to silver on the bay,
 With sparkling diamonds manifold,
 Or when the sun in highest hold
 Would tempt, we'd cross it, find our way
 To Usan, or the lone St. Skeo,
 And keep our pic-nic, free and bold,
 'Mong rocks and crannies, in the sound—
 The slumberous sound of falling wave
 Which aye the feet of monster lave—
 With under requiem, sad, profound :
 Each point tells stories of the past
 With hues of pathos o'er it cast.

[The rock of St. Skeo (pronounced Skay), hollowed out by the action of the water, has some rude resemblance to a monster animal, and it used to be a trick of ours in youth to pass over his back and sit upon his head—rather risky in some circumstances, but, as Coleridge says, "Youth is vain."]

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS CHARLES THEODORE OF BAVARIA.

["One is sorry to learn that Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria, the Prince-Surgeon, is ill. Recently, whilst performing an operation on a patient, he cut his hand with one of the instruments he was using, and blood-poisoning set in. At first his attendants feared for his arm, but fortunately all danger of his losing the limb has passed over. The Duke is the most reputable, and unquestionably the most useful, Royalty living. He has a passion for ocular surgery, and has built and equipped a hospital at his own expense. He will take neither fee nor reward for his advice, to which all classes are welcome, but the poor preferably. . . . The Duchess is his devoted ally, and nurses those whom her husband prescribes for. A noble and self-sacrificing couple are the Duke and Duchess."—*The Echo*, June 25, 1889.]

RIGHT royal are they in their work and care ;
They heal, and shed new light upon their way :
Fresh duties rise before them every day,
With thoughts of others, this right royal pair !
One said 'twas royal others' cares to bear,
And freely give to those that ne'er could pay ;
So are they royal, so they find their stay,
In sweet endurance wed with service fair.
Oh, Time, lay not hard burden on *him* now ;
For many wait his gracious healing touch
Deal with him gently, bring not overmuch
Of pain or pang, or wrinkle on the brow.
Oh double-wedded lives in work and bliss
Such joy be yours as Princes often miss.
June 26, 1889.

THE HEROISM OF LOWLY LIFE.

OFt have I wondered at the brave content,
The wholesome manfulness our poor folks show,
Alike 'mid Winter's cold and Summer's glow,
As under heavy loads they trudge down-bent.

Singing I meet them ; and I then relent
For scorn of their coarse ways or senses slow :
These are but guards that with the honest go,
To shield them from the curse of discontent.

Oh, would that many of the rich and great
Could see the sights that sometimes I have seen :
The lowly poor raised to unconscious state
By patient sufferance, and most cheerful mien ;
Sunshiny ways, and hope that for all Fate
Keeps such a heart as makes them King or Queen.

"HER DEAR LITTLE CHURCH."

IN ANSWER TO A LITTLE GIRL'S REQUEST FOR A SUBSCRIPTION TO AID IN THE RESTORATION OF HER "DEAR OLD LITTLE CHURCH."

DEAR child, your ancient church I never knew,
Yet I can see it in my fancy rise
'Mid screen of trees, its spire against the skies,
Clear, with its vane uplifted in the blue.

Who could refuse such quaint petition true
In language of the child. Who such denies
Out of fair store stands ill in his own eyes :
I willing tender my small gift thro' you.

For "her dear church." 'Tis well the Church has such
Devoted to her service : who can say
They find their joys in her, and think not much
Of service duly done her day by day :
'Tis thus the Church is built and served, renewed
With never-failing phalanx of the good.

TO PARIS.

ON MEETING UNEXPECTEDLY WITH FRIENDS, OCT. 14, 1886.

I.

O QUEEN of the cities most fair,
Thou sittest enthroned in thy grace,
With the pride of delight in thy face,
And the rapture of light in thy air.
And the skirt of thy robe it doth bear
The sheen of the green in its place,
And the Seine as it runneth its race
Returneth the smile thou dost wear,
As it sparkles by islands, and toys,
And, lingering, curveth for grace,
As if guarding the soul of the place,
And jealous for all of its joys.
O Queen of the cities most fair,
With thy rapture of light and of air.

II.

THOU chasest away the grave face
From the man who hath laboured in vain,
And thou soothest the invalid's pain
With the glow and the gleam of thy grace.
All welcome thy smile in its place,
And they look to thee, Queen, feeling fain
Of the wealth and the joy they may gain
In midst of thee running their race.
To wander alone by thy stream
Were delight for me secret and rare ;
But *doubled the pleasures we share* ;
And like sweetest surprises of dream
Were the faces of friends I found there,
O Queen of the cities most fair.

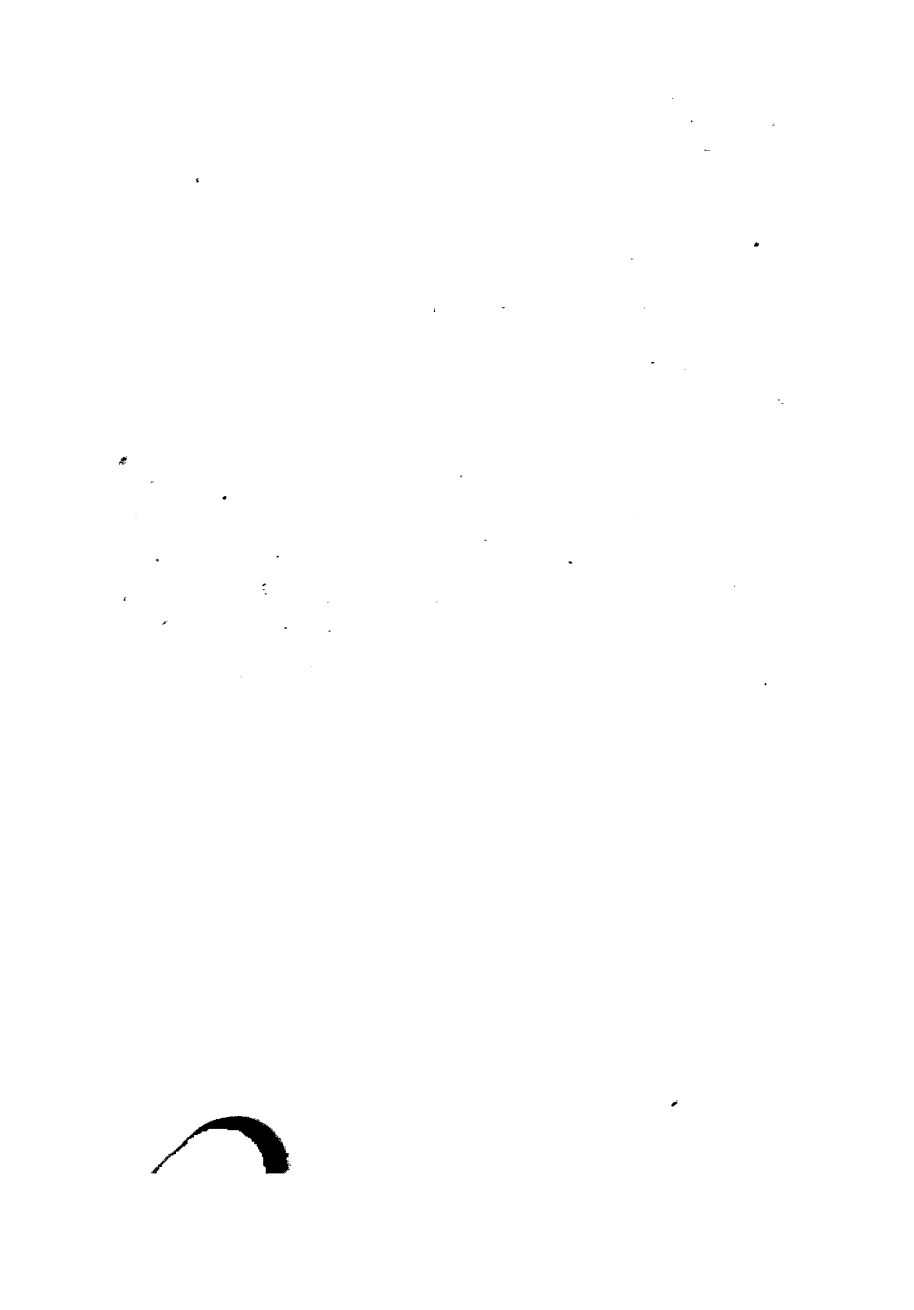
THE REPLY.

I.

AH, good Sonneteer, by your grace,
Ye have painted our Paris too fair,
In colours too tender and rare,
With never a spot on her face.
Not a spot—e'en where shot fell apace,
Leaving palaces ragged and bare,
As down at St. Cloud, to the air
The windows are open as space.
And the marks of the fighting are there :
You should come in December and see
How the Allées are ruined and bare
And gaunt are the gardens of tea.
Oh, good Sonneteer, by your grace,
You would find the frost biting your face.

II.

AND the Faubourgs are full of their vice
And Batignolles isn't all fair,
Spots leprous and foul linger there,
And diseases that aren't quite nice.
In St. Laurent you may see in a trice,
In dim corners which shrink from the air,
What tells how, were Paris laid bare,
As Madrid in Le Sage's device—
You may see what would sicken your heart,
And compel you to say, as we do,
That Paris, the Mistress of Art,
Wears a mask that is lifted for few.
Oh, good Sonneteer, by your grace,
You would find a blush steal o'er your face.



V.

RELIGIOUS MUSINGS.



I.

FAITH'S HEALING.

THE Scribes and Pharisees they frown

As on His way He goes ;
But for the sick and poor cast down

True healing from Him flows
On street and field and mountain wild,
Where oft He kneels in prayer ;
Enough in faith to follow mild
And find true healing there.

The blind men sitting by the way :
They saw not, but they cried,
" O Lord, have mercy " ; and full day
Filled blind eyes opened wide.

'Twas faith that won the victory :
So 'mid the crowd she came,
That, kneeling, scarce dare seek His eye,
But toucht His garment's hem ;
And straightway had her issue healed
For years that pained her sore ;
She gladly went : to her revealed
A secret hid before.

That other too who courage took
And sought the fallen crumb ;
Whose mighty faith cold word nor look
Sufficed to render dumb :

He looked on her and all His heart
Went out in pity mild ;
And so she won, by Faith's high art
The blessing for the child.

And on her soul besides He shed
The comfort of His word :

" Oh be it as thou wilt," He said,
" Thy prayer of faith is heard."

II.

PERFECT PEACE.

LIKE a Dead Sea, lie behind me
Sins and errors of the past :
My good Master hath inclined me
To His holy law at last.

Seemed no sweetness on the token
He held forth to me so long !
My proud spirit all was broken,
On my lips no grateful song.

Oh how rough the ways around me ;
Desert lands behind, before ;
Strong the terrors were that bound me,
Like a slave lashed to his oar !

And my pain pressed keen and keener,
Till I cried in my despair :
"Have mercy, Lord, on me a sinner—
Poor and bleeding, torn and bare !"

Then He touched me with His finger,
Saying, "I will make thee whole :
Arise, arise, no longer linger ;
Rise, press onward to the goal !"

Honey on the rod I tasted,
Joy stole on my heart anon ;
Thought of all the strength I'd wasted
Made me eager to atone.

Storms, I know, are still before me,
Seas of trouble run not dry ;
Faith is mighty to restore me,
Tho' the waves swell mountains high.

[*Sunday Mag.*]

III.
SPIRITUAL SONGS.
(FROM THE GERMAN.)

TO God on high we'll praises sing—
Give thanks for every favour ;
No evil future days may bring
Can hurt us more forever :
God hath in us great pleasure ;
And peace beyond all measure
Hath ended now our struggle !

Thy glory we will magnify,
And laud and bless Thy name,
That Thou, God-Father, in the sky
Dost watch, our lives to frame.
Immeasurable is Thy might ;
Thy will supreme thro' dark and light
In Thee, our King, we conquer.

Only begotten Jesus, Son !
The Father's chosen Way
To win them Satan had undone,
And all their strife allay :
God's Lamb, our Holy Lord and King,
Accept the prayers of need we bring
On us, poor ones, have pity.

O Holy Ghost, Thou, richest boon !
Thou Comforter most healing !
Beyond the wiles of Satan soon
Raise those to Jesus kneeling,
Whom He to save thro' grief did die ;
Turn all our loss to victory :
On thee we rest, relying.

[*Sunday Mag.*]

II.

PRAISE God, upon His throne on high,
Christians of every sort ;
To-day He sends His Son to die,
Down from His heavenly court.

He from the Father's breast dóth come,
A little Child so weak ;
Lies naked, poor—His only home
Among the oxen meek ;

Lays by His heavenly glory
And takes this lowly state ;
Fulfil's a servant's story,
Who did the worlds create !

He slumbers on His mother's breast ;
Her milk His hunger stays ;
On Him the angel-eyes do feast,
For He hath come to raise

Of David's seed a powerful root
From strength to strength to grow,—
A tree which God will fence about,
A Kingdom here below.

How wonderful ! our place He takes,
Assumes our flesh and blood ;
Of us the sons of God He makes,
Who had His will withstood.

We lords, and He the serving-man,—
Oh, what a change of part !
Could anything be friendlier than
The holy Jesus' heart ?

[*Sunday Mag.*]

VI.

SPECIMEN TRANSLATIONS.



I.

THE TWO GRENADIERS.

(FROM HEINE.)

TO France there marched two grenadiers
Who in Russia had prisoners lain ;
And as they came to the German land,
Their heads were bowed in pain.

Then heard they the sad, sad story
How France was of Fortune forsaken,
The great army conquered and scattered,
And the Emperor, the Emperor, taken.

Then over this news so grievous
The two to weep were fain :
The one cried out, " What a pain I feel ;
How my old wound burns again ! "

The other said : " All is over now :
I would I could die with thee ;
But I have a wife and child at home
Would starve were it not for me. "

" Oh, what care I for wife or child,
In my heart grand desires awaken,
Let them beg their bread when hungry,
My Emperor, my Emperor is taken !

" Grant me, O Comrade, one request :
If I were soon to die,
Then take my body with thee to France,
In French earth let me lie.

"Let my Legion-cross with its ribbon red
Upon my heart be laid ;
And put my gun into my hand,
And buckle me on my blade.

"So will I lie, and hearken well,
Like a sentinel, in my grave,
Till once I hear the cannon roar
And the gallop of horses brave.

"The Emperor will ride over my grave,
Many swords flash over the field :
Full-armed from out the grave I'll spring
My Emperor to shield."

II.

THE FLOWER GIRLS.

(FROM GOETHE'S SECOND FAUST.)

BEARING flowerets, come we in
To your German court so bright ;
Your sweet praises all to win,
We have deckt us out to-night.

Flowery wreath and flowery spray
On brown locks we lightly show,
Here alike their part must play—
Silken thread and silken bow.

Praise-deserving work, we know,
Of reward is well secure :
Flowers we bring, by art that glow,
And thro' the changing year endure.

By its colour each bit took
What was its symmetric place ;
Pleasing is the whole in look,
If the parts have not your grace.

Pretty are we, fair of feature—
Garden-girls, with lightsome heart :
What is true to woman-nature
Always is so like to art !

[*Good Words.*]

III.

TWO SONNETS FROM PETRARCH.

SONNET V.

WHEN moved by sighs I call thee by the name
That in my heart is written fair of Love,
LAUdlike it sounds, of sweetest accents wove,
As my fond tongue begins the word to frame.
Your REgal state that next asserts its claim
Doubles my courage the emprise to prove ;
But "Tarry" cries the last, for powers above
All that ye boast alone could reach this fame.
Thus all that call you by that word again
Are taught at once to LAUd and to REvere,
For praise and reverence are your rightful state.
Unless, perchance, Apollo should disdain
The mortal tongue that, strange to fitting fear,
Around his greeny boughs should lightly prate.

SONNET IX.

COLONNA glorious, like a column strong,
Our hopes thou bearest of the Latin name,
Thou still dost calmly hold thy virtuous fame
Even while the Pope condemns thee as for wrong.
Here is no palace, theatre, galleries long,
But fir, and beech, and pine put forth their claim
To stir the soul with true poetic flame
Amid green grass, and hills, and sweet birds' song.
Raised from the earth to heaven our spirits soar,
As soft the nightingale in woodland shade
Pours all night long his melancholy strain.
With loving thoughts the heart grows more and more :
Oh, why is scene so fair imperfect made
Because my lord must absent still remain ?

TOUCH-AND-GO

A Series of Poems

MEANT FOR

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

BY

ALEXANDER H. JAPP

LL.D., F.R.S.E.

*The earth is full of beauty :
The fairies are not dead ;
If we would see what joy may be,
We must, like little children, free
And happy, lightsome tread :
Trust heart far more than head :
See life in innocence and joy,
And all our various powers employ,
And know not fear or dread.*

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

MDCCCXCIII.

Go, Little Book, on softest wing,
And find me hearts to love,
While gently I shall hum and sing ;
And tho' I look above,
Shall not forget the flowers below—
The bees, the birds, the trees ;
Well knowing Childhood loves to go,
And see and think of these.

The sky is blue ; the violet too
Is sky shed down on earth ;
The clouds that brood in pond and flood
Repeat themselves with mirth :
So we may see that earth below
And sky and heaven above
Are joined in happy touch-and-go,
And tell us all of Love.

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I.

WHEN I AM TWENTY-ONE.

(NOTES OF A CONVERSATION ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL
BETWEEN TWO LOVERS AGED 7 AND 6 RESPECTIVELY.)

HE.

OH, I will buy a horse *so high*—
With long and splendid mane,
And I will ride close by your side,
And kiss you o'er again :
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As ever horse could be ;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

SHE.

Oh, I will buy a doll *so high*—
And nurse it on my knee,
And you shall say, none half so gay
You e'er before did see ;
And I shall make, just for your sake,
A little robe of blue,
To tell to all who on me call
How truly I love you :
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As ever doll could be ;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

HE.

My horse shall go, a glorious show,
All shod with silver clear ;
His bit shall shine like plate-work fine—
Oh, he shall be *so dear* !
And I shall blow a trumpet—so !—
As forth I ride with you ;

And for your sake I vow to make
A saddle-cloth of blue:
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As horse could ever be;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

SHE.

And I will make, just for your sake,
A little cot so fine,
Wherein my doll may lie or loll,
In either storm or shine.
"A dear! a dear!" with laughing cheer,
I think I hear you say;
His eyes so blue, like mine in hue,
And honest as the day:
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As ever doll could be;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

HE.

And by my side, in all its pride,
A jewelled sword shall hang,
To tell how I, in battle cry
And 'mid the shout and clang,
Shall rush with blow upon the foe
To keep you safe from fear;
And come with pride back to your side
To wipe away your tear:
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As ever knight could be;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

SHE.

And at my side, in all its pride,
Shall hang a picture fair
Of you, dear boy, and with much joy
I'll keep it ever there,
With eyes so blue and look so true,
Till you come back again,
To kiss me true, as now you do ;
And I with kisses fain
Will hug my sweet, so gay and neat,
Unto my breast, and say :
So true a knight, so brave and bright,
Ne'er fought by night or day :
As true as gold, as blithe and bold
As ever knight could be ;
When I am twenty-one years old,—
Just wait, and you shall see.

HE.

Ah, there's the bell ; come, little Nell :
I'm sure we shall be late,
And we must run or, sure's a gun,
Our names are on the slate ;
And we shall need to stay and read,
Or write out "p's" and "q's" :
For sure am I, good Mister Sly
Will not take an excuse.

II.

FAIRY MUSIC.

THE bluebells make a music
That fairies always hear,
Within the lonely wood-walks
In the Summer time of year.

Ting-a-ting, ting, so gently
The low sounds come and go—
Oh, the foxgloves stand up proudly,*
And the ferns are all tiptoe.†

The listening trees their branches
Bend down to speak some word,
Then wave and whisper softly,
And all in true accord.

The lingering violets' laughter ‡
The pause of the music fills;
And the ash exults and shakes his hair, §
Supreme o'er awful ills.

* And with reason too. They are not foxgloves, but folk's-gloves—the gloves of the folk, the fairies, the fairy-folk, and as such may well stand up proudly at sound of the bluebells' music. It is difficult to understand why the spelling was so stupidly changed. We shall remember to call them folk's-gloves.

† And well may the ferns stand on tiptoe; for fern seed once caught, according to the fairy rule, would make the recipient of it invisible, while the unrolled fronds, so like miniature clenched hands, were held to be charms of the fairies against witchcraft and the "Evil Eye."

‡ And not without cause. The roots and flowers of the violet, in old days and in days not so very old, were believed to moderate anger and to cause smiles.

§ The leaves of the ash were believed to be good against the bites of serpents and adders.

The daisy feels the touches
Of the fairy feet that speed,
With the daintiest of measures,
Over heath and holt and mead,

At call of the bluebells' music ;
And the birds make pauses fain,
To catch a note still sweeter
Than their own most lovely strain.

And that is why in Summer,
When the sun is at the height,
There is silence in the woodlands
For the bluebells' song of light.

And if you would hear that music
You must seek the shaded wood,
And lay your ear to the soft green grass
And listen in loving mood.

And then you may see the fairies,
And hear the bluebells' song ;
And the earth may give you tidings
Of the right and of the wrong.

III.

THE FAIRIES' FERN SEED.

ONCE on a time
There lived in the prime
Of a forest, with flowers and with ferns very gay,
A man who had read
Of the fairies that sped
Thro' the glades in the moonlight in ordered array.
And he oft had a wish
With the fairies to brush
Thro' the glade, and to share in their revels so fine ;
And he ranged all the night
Thro' the dark to the light,
Till he loved beyond daybreak the silver moonshine.
And once as he ranged,
From his fellows estranged,
Thro' the forest, with whispers and voices so low,
He lay down to rest
On the little green crest
Of a hillock, all circled with pine-trees below.
And he dreamt as he lay
Of a brightness like day,
And in midst of the brightness the form of a man,
But of stature so small,
That he scarce seemed in all
Of the length of a foot, if so much as a span.
And the wonderful creature,
So weird in each feature,
Stooped down, as in wonder, on this man to look,
And he breathed on his breast,
And he threw on his chest
What seemed like to seed, from his own breast he took.

And when our friend woke,
He nor whispered nor spoke,
But he knew he was changed from the man he had
been ;
For the fairy had brought
Just the charm that he sought
And with fern seed endowed him to walk forth
unseen.

And oh ! the delight
That he had in his flight :
He looked in on neighbours when they were alone ;
He heard all the talk
Of the lovers that walk
In the sweet of the evening in lanes soft and lone.

He would smile to himself
As the merchant his pelf
Counted up on his table, and then laughed to see
How it ever increased,
Making life like a feast
Of a king who can make a man bondman or free.

He would list to the schemes
Of the dreamers of dreams,
Against kings and armies, and laughed at them too ;
And when he heard treason,
Was there any good reason
Why he should attempt their foul work to undo ?

He rejoiced in his power
As he filled up each hour
With something both fresh and delightful to know,
And it seemed to him clear
That the life we have here
Is like to the sunlight on cold bank of snow.

He was no more a man,
And just think if you can
What our hero had lost thro' the power he had
won?—

His heart almost dead,
If the thoughts in his head
Kept pace with the impulse that carried him on.

Yet his heart was not dead,
If obedient to head,
And sometimes a longing possessed him to see
The haunts of his youth
If once more, without ruth,
He could wander again, as in youth, trouble-free.

Thus for one year so strange
Did our hero make range
Of the world, and the fairies had fed him with dew ;
But he found his heart beat
As he came near the street
Where his old wrinkled mother sat—weeping, 'tis
true.

He looked down upon her,
He felt it dishonour
To spy upon her as on others he'd done ;
And he longed just to say
That he loved her to-day,
And for all that had vexed her would gladly atone ;

To shake her old hand,
And to hear her so bland
Recount all the tricks that in youth he had played :
But tho' he was near
And most clearly could see her,
He could not convey what went round in his head.

And the longing it grew,
And so keen did pursue
That the unseen beholder was moved very sore ;
And he prayed, " Oh, but once
That I now might advance,
As I did when a boy, for a kiss at the door ! "

But the fairies, who hold
Very tight what is sold
Unto them, never yielded to this man his choice ;
And they say that the sigh
Of the wind, when 'tis high,
In the trees is the echo of his mournful voice !

So you see, it were bad
If we sought to be clad
With a power such as others in no way may share :
You may think it were fine
With the fairies to shine ;
But be sure, in the long run, 'twould bring you
despair.

[*American Wide-Awake.*]

IV.

THE DANCE OF THE FLOWERS.

(IN WELCOME OF THE SPRING.)

AN April night, and the west wind stirs,
Softly embracing the elms and firs;
And the birds are restless, because the moon
Looks down expectant, as of some boon
Of magical music from bird to be
A chord with the sighings of flower and tree:
For all seems ready, but the songsters fail,
And May has not yet brought the nightingale.
So bright the moon that the flowers look up,
Stirring the dew in their ivory cup;
And their shadows, like souls of flowers, lie fair,
That would vanish at touch of a ruder air:
Enchantment broods o'er the dreamy scene,
As if at the beck of some Fairy Queen.

See, something in yonder border stirs,
But lightly as waving of gossamers:
It glides; it glimmers, as softly it goes—
Softly as fall of the leaf from the rose:
A pearly whiteness, it glistens—'tis drawn,
As if by magic, to yonder lawn.

Do I dream? Is my fancy above my sight?
Is it form, or only a wave of light?
Across the lawn, like a rainbow lies
A glory of colour, like the thousand eyes
That shone o'er the couch of the Sultan, fanned
By the slaves with their peacock fans in their hand.

I look, I wonder, am rapt in doubt,
Till I see that the wave of light spreads out:

It ebbs and flows and contracts again,
Like the bow between the sun and the rain;
And beats, as when gentle breath has gone
To a dying fire, bringing flame thereon.
The colours mix and they intetwine,
Till my eyes are dazed with the intershine;
As when one comes sudden from dark to light
No particular form is detailed to sight.
I shut my eyes for a moment or two,
And then what a picture meets my view:
'Tis a party of flowers in their gayest attire:
They nod and bow, advance and retire;
For all have met at the fairies' hest,
To welcome the Spring in its beauty drest.

And fair in the centre a tall Lily stood
Directing the revels of this sisterhood:
A Lily so chastely in pearl robe drest,
That the moon shone thro' her tremulous vest,
Like a light thro' a soft alabaster shade
By cunning fingers of artist made.
And she held in her hand a wand of gold,
The stems of grasses set fold on fold,
Coloured with pollen-dust that shone
When the silver moonlight looked thereon.
And her train was borne by a tiny crowd,
Who, as she walked, advanced and bowed:
There were Primroses fair and Anemones good,
That dream o'er their beauty in shady wood,
And Violets breathing their sweet perfume,
That takes the heart in the woody gloom;
Late Crocuses, purple and yellow and white,
And Snowdrops, holding their cups of light:
And as poets tell just before folks die

A beauty, beyond all known to eye,
Will sometimes over the features steal ;
So did these in their later breath reveal.
A beauty they brought to a fitting shrine
At the feet of the Lily that looked divine.

The Daisies in crowds had awoke from sleep,
And opened their eyes and came to peep ;
And Marsh-marigolds that stare so bold
In the meadows moist, their story told,
And whispered the Daisies in words so plain
That the Daisies smiled and smiled again,
Till a blush stole round their golden eyes—
All quaint, ray-lidded in surprise.

The Lily then raised her wand aloft,
And, sudden, a trumpet blew so soft
And sweet that my eyes turned—would you blame ?
To see whence the wondrous music came.
And there I saw like soldiers stand
A line of Tulips in livery grand,
Of gold and crimson, and striped with flame,
And from their trumpets the music came.

And as they blew the rest did dance—
Advance, retire, turn round, advance,
Take partners' hands, to partners set,
Observing all flower-like etiquette.

The Ferns in fullest force were there,
And each in his hand held a pennon fair,
Which he waved to his partner with stately air.
I saw them dance with the Wallflowers red,
That carried censers of incense fed
From their hearts, and shed o'er the dancers too

Soft clouds that softly the west wind blew
To left or right, till it faded away,
And where it had been was a pearly grey.
They danced with the Flags in their grace of pride,
And with Whitlow Grass spreading arms so wide ;
And the bells of the Furze were borne aloft
On the shoulders of Ivy, yielding, soft.
The Sweetbriar moved on tiptoe bland,
With a sprig of Laburnum in his hand,
And he paired with Honesty, sweet and fair—
Ah, surely was never more handsome pair !
And a Rhododendron still in bud
By the waist clasped a Lilac that mimly stood,
And shook her hair, shedding out perfume,
And she had a necklace of Peach-tree bloom.

And the Jonquils moved with their spearlike crest,
And their glimmering star upon their breast,
And they danced with Hyacinths in hue
Like the sky, hair loose, which the soft wind blew
Like mist about them, and made them look
Like shadows of flowers in the running brook,
While from their bells faint tinklings went
To please the ear as well as the scent.
The Japonica stepped from sheltered wall,
Like a slender beauty for her first ball,
Emerging from hand of her maid with a smile
That told a secret did her beguile ;
And within her locks, entwined so fair,
Was the softest spray of the Maidenhair,
That against the warmth of her flowerets red
Gave softness and grace to her lovely head :
None else with her could vie for grace,
Or the gentle radiance of her sweet face.

And the silvery Willow, with her catkins gay,
For lace, shaking gold upon the grey
Of her dress that glimmered like shot-silk fine,
Was paired with a branch of the green Spruce Pine.
Like blushing youths, Red Campions came,
A little late, but 'twas all the same;
And they took for partners with love unfeigned
The Wood-sorrels white and purple veined,
With a motion sensitive—"fairy bells,"
That led the Fairies to moonlit dells:
Oh, the sweetest of sweet trefoils were they,
Which with Druids and Christians alike held sway.
And the Wild Geranium, like olden pae,.
Danced light with the Golden Saxifrage,
All moist, with a fringe of moss below
That green and gold did shimmer and glow.
And the Snake's-head Lily looked smiling on,
And bowed to the friends who had partners won—
No "Wallflower" she, tho' she sought her ease
Or deemed best to move but by slow degrees:
"Do nothing hasty," was her wise saw;
"But move according to Nature's law."
And she held sweet converse with sisters there—
A beaming row of Auriculas fair:
The Orchis in arm with the Speedwell walked,
And 'twas plain that of something sweet they talked,
For towards each other their heads inclined
So softly, bespeaking the kindred mind.
And the Bull-rush, safely guarded about
With full-drawn swords, was the sentinel stout
That o'er the gathering kept close ward,
As the flowers danced merry upon the sward:
And the Water-soldiers their adjutants were
Who on their shoulders ball-epaulets bear.

And then there were stately Daffodils
With their yellow cups and their scolloped frills,
That for partners chose the Fleur-de-lis,—
Which looked as it held some mystery—
Some sense of the sacredness which sheds
Its glory around the crownèd heads ;
Or the secret rapt of the lass who knows
One loves her truly in spite of foes,
And is her crown, thro' his love, full, free ;
And she knows herself a queen to be.

What else I saw, I may not tell :
I was pledged to the secret by book and bell,
And indeed am under a kind of spell.
For the Fairies suddenly joined their friends,
In the revels which only cock-crow ends ;
And if I *were* free, my pen would fail
To convey a hint of the wondrous tale :
For magical hues and motions rare
Nought else on earth could with it compare.

V.

THE CELTIC LEGEND OF THE DAISY.

OH, sweet is the Celtic legend old,
Which tells how the daisy came to hold
Its place among flowers, and to win the grace
Of every mother, in every place.
They said that each fair infant new
To earth, who died, on the earth did strew
Some new and lovely flower to cheer
The parents' hearts from year to year.
And when Malvina's babe, her son,
Whom her mother's eyes had feasted on,
Lay white and stark, and his eyelids drawn,
She slept not either at dark or dawn ;
Nor after, when laid in the cold earth's breast,
Would she seek for gentle sleep or rest,
But, mourning, wept by the dear cot's side,
Like a lovely woman petrified.

But the maidens of Morven came to her,
And breathed in her ear, tho' she did not stir
At the first : "O Malvina, we comfort bring ;
We have seen, we have seen, a wondrous thing :
The infant you weep on a light mist borne
From above to the earth, with the dews of morn ;
And it came very near, till we saw that it shed
Sweet flowers on earth of the white and red.

Look, O Malvina, we bring you these—
No flower more sweet, more sure to please
We have ever seen—gold disk set round
With snowy leaves as tho' finely bound
Together and softly, and rays so sweet
Of the crimson tinge it—and when the fleet
Fair wind doth move it, we well might say
That in the meadow a babe doth play:
For the flower of thy bosom soft and fair
To our hills hath given this floweret rare.

Then Malvina rose, and, weeping still,
Went out to look on the grassy hill;
And when she saw the daisies' grace,
A smile chased the tears from her pallid face.
"I may not mourn; for a fair re-birth
His death hath won for all time on earth;
And mothers will look on his floweret fair
And for infants passed no more despair."

[*The Sun Mag.*]

VI.

WHITE CAMPION.

FAIR fell the sunlight on the marble steps
 Of great Athene's temple at midnoon,
 In Delphi's Sacred Vale by Helicon,
 Flecking the stone to flickering gold and pearl
 That wavered, lucid, like the locks that framed
 The goddess' face severe-serene : so still—
 The doves that early cooed divinely, now
 Were silent, dozing ; and the very flies
 Made shadows on the marble, all so still,
 You scarce could tell which shadow and which fly :
 And sunk in slumber lay the youth whose call
 Was day by day to feed Athene's owls—
 To catch the flies, and make the owls' repast,
 And feed them as they blinked of wisdom lent,
 So pledged unto the goddess for his life.

Yet now he slept all soundly in the sun—
 O'ercome by pain and sorrow at the heart.
 And there he lay ; his shadow by his side,
 Unlike the shadow of a man—far more
 Like shadow of some shapeless nondescript,
 Such as were found in Hyperborean climes,
 Nor man, nor beast, but bred of both ; for he,
 Deformed, was stricken greatly ; and no eye
 Had ever on him rested with delight,
 Nor eye of father, nor of mother even,
 For then in Greece was beauty only prized.
 Campion his name, or Lychnis in the Greek,
 Which means the same ; and he indeed had known
 Disgusted gaze of men and oft had wept,
 For in his crooked shape was gentle soul,
 White, white as Evening Lychnis in the shade.

Sometimes a warrior, reverent, would come
With offerings, or to dedicate his arms
Unto the goddess, and would gently look
On Campion's face, and speak in kindly tone,
As warriors oft are gentlest of men :
Their words and looks had made poor Campion glad
And shortened much his dull and weary day.

And as he lay a figure came on him
Divinely framed, with limbs and head so fair
That men had guessed a goddess walked the earth
At earliest glance ; and had they seen the face
Had bowed themselves in worship, bred of fear
Far more than love : for this in very deed
Was great Athene come unto her fane,
To see her service and obeisance done.
She came not now as an Olympian Queen ;
But robed as any Grecian maiden might,
And in disguise, she came and entered in.
And as she went, all shadowless, she seemed
To slip, a gliding glory, o'er the place,
That wakened none of all the things that slept,
Nor Campion, with strange shadow on the stone,
Tho' from her eyes went lightnings, penetrating,
As if the souls of all things owned her ken.

And when she saw her servant there asleep,
She wondered, waiting o'er him for a while,
In question how 'twere best to punish him ;
Then struck by some rare beauty in the face—
A sweetness as of thought beyond his years,
And noble longings in the forehead fine,
In conflict with the monstrousness of form,
Great pity moved her as of motherhood
Divine and human. And she stooped adown

And kissed his lips, and let her glowing breath
Wander about him for a little while,
When he awoke, with wide eyes, wondering,
Like to a picture. As she seemed to fade
He whispered, "Welcome, mother-eyes at last ;
Oh bide forever, and look into mine,
As now." For in that glance the goddess threw

**The mildness of all tenderness and love
For yearning weakness, to uplift and cheer
And strengthen. In his eyes she looked again
With those grand eyes that saw to inmost soul ;
And now saw only suffering patience crowned
With sweetest flower of humbleness and love :
A pure white flower of human faith and hope,
And use, tho' sleeping in the sun's hot ray.**

But goddess' kiss is birth to other climes
Amid Immortals ; and so Campion passed
Into Elysium sweet ; and where he lay
There sprang a flower that, like him, sleeps in sun
And opens only to the evening ray—
White Campion, or Evening Lychnis, named—
So named because of that fair soul that passed,
Beneath the dower of great Athene's kiss,
To the Immortals from a doom of pain.

His memory lives for us for evermore
In that sweet flower that holds a lamp of light
By meadow-side or hedgerow in the dark—
Sweet Campion, Evening Lychnis, named of men.

[Athene was the Greek Goddess of Wisdom—the owl was her attendant bird and symbol. The gods of Olympia were said to cast no shadows ; therefore she goes "shadowless"—"a gliding glory," though disguised, with none of the symbols of her divinity.]

VII.

ROUSSEAU AND THE SPEEDWELL.

OF all the flowers that drink the dew
There is none more fair than the Speedwell blue.
In the early Springtime, like an eye,
It peeps from the hedgerow as you pass by ;
Like a bit of sky thrown down to show
How heaven is knit to the earth below.
And to heaven it turns its eye of hope,
As if all content were within its scope.
It was not forgot when the thought had birth
That the flowers are the shining stars of earth.
And it holds its own with the flowering race
In meekly asserting its right of place.
Now an anecdote I will tell to you
Of Rousseau and the faithful Speedwell blue.
To visit a dear-loved friend he had gone,
Near Geneva, amid the mountains lone.
And they sat one day on a little bank,
And beside them wild flowers rank on rank.
But both preferred the Speedwell true,
With its soft appealing eye of blue.
For a tuft at their feet before them rose,
And its heart to the sun it did unclose.
And Rousseau's friend said, "In this fair scene,
That flower is the soul of content, I ween."

They parted ; and long years passed away—
Thirty indeed, and Rousseau was grey.

He had wandered an exile far and wide—
His heart nigh broke 'twixt his love and pride.

He had won the fame for which he had sighed,
But content and peace were to him denied.

And he came again to the mountains where
He had walked with his friend—a happy pair.

But his friend was dead, the house was gone,
And Rousseau in sorrow walked alone ;

Recalling the days when his heart could bend,
As flower to the sun, to a loving friend.

No one could tell where his old friend lay,
For men too had changed since that sweet day.

And he wandered on, all sad and strange
As he thought of the years and their load of change.

Till at last he came to the very bank
Where the wild flowers blossomed rank on rank,—

Where he and his friend had sat and gazed
With delight on the Speedwell's eye upraised ;

And, looking down, what did he see
But the selfsame tuft still blossoming free.

The sight o'ercame him—the tears fell fast,
The flower so strongly recalled the past.

Silent he turned, and left the place,
The tears still streaming adown his face.

VIII.

THE LEGEND OF THE COLUMBINE.

BLUE is the colour of love and hope ;
And this is the fair Columbine's scope :—
A lover once was to bid adieu
To his sweetheart for a year or two ;
And for token true he wished a flower,
And for pansy or speedwell many an hour
He sought but found not, and took at last
A blue Columbine as he passed
To the trysting-place ; and standing there,
With head uncovered to sun and air,
He vowed love true tho' in distant land,
And placed his floweret in her hand,
And turned away as she stood and gazed
While he went onward, dull, half-mazed ;
And absently as she stood, she thought
I will question the flower, as maidens sought
In those old days to learn their lot
Of the flowers by " He loves me "—" loves me not."
She pulled one leaf, then breathed a sigh,
And looking down there met her eye
A dove's true form, and, glad, she cried,
" He loves me—it cannot be denied :

For the dove is the symbol of love and truth,
And this fair flower brings me no ruth :

In my Bible beside the sacred name
I'll place it till he his flower doth claim."

But he came not back and the floweret lay
For years and years, till it died away

To dust on the sacred page, and stained
The page till the form of a dove remained :

And now the Columbine is held the sign
Of lover forsaken and left to pine.

[Columbine is really dove's flower, from the Latin
columba—a dove.]

IX.

MAHOMMED AND THE MALLOW.

THE Prophet Mahommed for weeks had lain
Stretched moaning on a bed of pain :
His fevered head tossed from side to side
On his pillow, and restful sleep denied ;
And all his joints were like lead, and his skin
As if fire had been poured his veins within :
And at last he fell on a gentle doze,
And when he awoke he had fain arose ;
For he felt refreshed, and soothed, and clear
In his mind, and he asked what had brought this
cheer—
This change that was like unto life from death—
From the fever-labour to joyous breath.
And they told him that wondrous virtue had gone
From the delicate shirt that he now had on,
Which was made from the fibres of mallows fine—
A fabric with virtue almost divine ;
And Mahommed smiled, and he said, "Tis well,
Show me the plant, with its curving swell."
The plant was brought and he looked on it mild,
And touched it gently, and then he smiled.
"Tis a noble plant, but let all men know
That Mahommed has blessed it—let it grow

To nobler aspect, with flowers more fair,
In colour of all flowers passing rare
Of deep blood-red or of flesh tint—so
That it tell of health and health's full glow ;
For it blessed the Prophet and he doth bless
The mallow, and dowers it in proof of this
With such beauty that all men shall love it well
And delight to have it with them to dwell."
And thus was the mallow by Mahommed brought
To Geranium ; and now 'tis of all men sought ;
And they nurse it and guard it, and hardly know
That it once was the mallow, unknown and low
In the scale of the flowers ; but a Prophet's word
Of grateful praise is in full accord
With great Nature's heart ; and thus you see
How the lovely Geranium came to be.

X.

CHARLES THE FIRST AND THE ELM.

OH, wondrous the charms in plants that lie
To quicken the powers of memory :

Links of association fine

Sleep in the oak, and elm, and pine :

And soft heart-tendrils, defying time,
Are woven round poplar, lilac, and lime :

Wind-harps indeed to the heart are the trees
That sound to the softer emotions' breeze.

Of an incident touching I will tell
That to Charles the First at the end befell,

On that sad journey—the last he took—
When hardly on aught did he dare to look :

As he neared Spring Gardens before his eye
Rose an elm-tree clear against the sky—

Its branches swaying aloft and green,
And far o'er the houses it could be seen.

'Twas the same that he and his brother gay
In youth's fair time, in their cheerful play,

Had planted there ; and the Monarch now
Smiled, and the shade passed from his brow

As he spoke of the happy days of his youth--
The days of innocence and truth—

And at last came tears like a sweet relief,
That haply softened the Monarch's grief,

And helped him to march with a firmer mind
To his death, and of foes to think more kind.

XL

THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

THE Forget-me-not with its eye of blue
Looks out from the hedgerow clear and true :
A pledge of love and of friendship fair,
That tells they can parting and hardship bear.
" *Forget-me-not*, if you wander away,
But often think of a distant day,—
When once again all unchanged we'll meet,"
Thus speaks our flower so pure and sweet.
And would you hear how first it grew

On the famous field of Waterloo ?

I will tell the tale, and I know you'll say,
'Tis a lovely story every way.

A soldier young left a friend behind
Who desired to be ever kept in mind ;
And for pledge of his faith the soldier got
A plant of the fair Forget-me-not.

Close, close to his breast he bore it afar
Thro' all the terrors of that great war ;
But he fell in the thick of the closing fight,
And there he was buried out of sight.

A little seed on his breast had lain,
That now struck root above the slain ;

And as years went on all around there grew
Thick knots of the flower, so fair and blue,

To tell of the changeless faith and truth
That dwelt in the heart of the soldier youth.

Forget-me-not, writ all around,
Is the soldier's witness on that ground.

Tho' dead, he says in accents clear,
"My monument lies round me here."

XII.

MAY.

THE lilac is out, and the thrush on the spray
Is telling the story of beautiful May ;
The hawthorn sheds its sweet scent on the breeze,
And the wind is embracing the tall poplar-trees.

The birds in sweet chorus are singing a glee ;
Wild rose like a garden the hedge makes to be ;
The convolvulus trails its sweet wreaths over all,
While the sparrows are busy at each other's call.

The wren on the roadside is active and glad ;
The stockdove is telling the joy that it had
To its mate, when at morning it hurried to find
The food that was most to her ladyship's mind.

The lizard is waking on hillside, in glade,
To lie in the sun where a path has been made
By the footsteps of rovers ; it loveth the sand
When the sunshine glows warm all over the land.

The children are busy on hillside, in grove,
And making chain-necklaces such as they love.
Oh, sweet is the sight on this balmiest day
When the softest of west winds is telling of May.

The Maytime has come with its gladness and flowers ;
The hollies and ferns are making them bowers ;
The lilac is out, and the thrush on the spray
Is telling the story of beautiful May.

[Good Words.]

XIII.

THE FULL MOON IN AUGUST.

BEAUTIFUL Moon, so soft, so bright,
Walking the pathways of the Night ;
Where do you come from ? where do you go ?
Do you love your friends in the world below ?
Over the clouds like a ship you leap,
Leaving a track of pearl to keep
A halo, and tell you have passed that way,
In spite of the clouds that eclipse your ray.
Beautiful Moon, so soft, so bright,
Like a shepherd watching his flocks by night,
That wander away and wander far,
For your flock is planet and trembling star.
And they seek to serve you in many a guise,
And dote most fondly on your fair eyes ;
And circle you round in many a lake
With a meek obeisance no wind can break.
If it blows too roughly you only smile
The better your followers to beguile ;
And you lift a look of sublime repose
When the calm of a Tempest before it goes.
The Lightning shakes out its locks in vain ;
You walk serenely o'er cloudy plain ;
And you look so fair thro' the fir-trees fine
We wonder not men held you once divine.
Beautiful Moon, so soft, so bright,
Walking the pathways of the Night ;
Where do you come from ? where do you go ?
Do you love your friends in the world below ?

* As did the Greeks: the moon was worshipped as Luna, and one of the most beautiful stories in the Greek mythology is the love of Pan, the Pastoral God, for Luna—a subject which Mr. Browning has treated in his own peculiar manner in his volume called *Dramatic Idylls* (Second Series).

XIV,

LINNÆUS AND THE GORSE.

WHEN the loving Linnæus, who studied the
flowers,
Came over to England to take note of ours,
From Sweden, the land of the fir and the frost,
With friends, as it chanced, he o'er Putney Heath
crossed.

And there, on a sudden, Linnæus fell down
On his knees, as when one gets a gift from the crown;
And his eyes turned to heaven as in rapture of prayer,
And made his companions wonder and stare.
They thought he was mad for a moment or two,
Till they saw that a furze-bush before him stood true,
With its tangle of yellow hung out on the breeze,
Like to butterflies tangled in branches of trees.

For never before had Linnæus seen a flower
So lovely and perfect, all grace for its dower—
In the waste sandy places, like lamps in the night
Unexpectedly shedding their softness and light.

He was thanking his Maker for gift so divine;
For he felt that all beauty was only the sign
Of a love that around and above circles all—
The love of a Father who heareth our call.

All the beautiful things that our Father hath given
Are but gifts of His love ever telling of heaven;
And if, like Linnæus, in heart we fall down,
'Tis a blessing far better than gift from a crown.

For the smallest among us may follow the great
In humility, thankfulness, if not in state;
And the great ones are greater when, childlike, they
fall

On their knees 'fore their Maker to thank Him for all.

[*American Wide-Awake.*]

XV.

RAIN.

O^H, pleasant rain !
On hill and plain
You can sweeten Summer,—
Feed the brooks,
Give fresher looks
To every bright newcomer.

The flowers would fade,
And softened shade
Would cease from sheltered bower ;
Glad things that played
In leafy glade
Would die but for the shower.

The little rills
That from the hills
Come down with silver twining,
Would dry away,
And leaves decay,
And lose their greeny lining.

The flower's full cup
That offers up
Its nectar to the bee,
Would shrink and pale,
And honey fail,
Alike for you and me.

The birds that sip
And dainty dip
Their beaks in brook and pool,
Would cease their song,
And faint and long
For rain to cheer and cool.

The sun so sweet
Would kill with heat
The corn on all the land ;
And fields so graced
With green, a waste
Of arid plain would stand.

It gladdens all,
Both great and small ;
It cheers the thirsty ground ;
And fills the corn
That Plenty's horn
Its gifts may shed around.

Oh, pleasant rain !
On hill and plain
You can sweeten Summer,—
Feed the brooks,
Give fresher looks

To every late newcomer.

XVI.

AFTER THE WIND AND THE RAIN.

OH, sweet is the scent of the lilac and rose,
And fresh is the green of the lime and the plane,
And the eyes of the daisies they wink and uncloze
After the wind and the rain.

The hedgerows are radiant and laughingly glow,
For the May is arrayed like a bride with her train,
And the bryony puts on her brightest for show
After the wind and the rain.

The wild honeysuckles they climb and they creep,
And the primrose in yellow is starring the lane,
And the ferns all on tiptoe erect them to peep
After the wind and the rain.

The bees and the butterflies run a glad race
The sweetest of nectar from flower-cups to drain ;
And the efts and the lizards are gliding apace
After the wind and the rain.

And the beetles in armour of bronze and of blue
And of red in their armies are working amain ;
And the tits make a flash with their sea-shifting hue
After the wind and the rain.

The linnets in chorus are singing a glee
With a rapture of joy, as tho' they were fain
To show all the world how glad they can be
After the wind and the rain.

The cuckoo from hollows sends forth his soft note ;
To heaven's gate the lark is ascending again,
And the robin and wren throw their souls in their
throat
After the wind and the rain.

The rooks from the elm-trees are taking their flight,
And a crafty old worthy is leading the train,
With a caw-caw so cheerful and hopeful and bright
After the wind and the rain.

And down in the meadows the lambkins are gay
By their dams that are nibbling the clover again,
And sweet are all sounds and all scents on this day
After the wind and the rain.

So we in the midst of our happy life-May
Should look on glad Nature with all her gay train
Rejoicing with them that they can be so gay
After the wind and the rain.

XVII.

WONDERFUL WORLD.

WONDERFUL world, how bright you are,
From the tiny flower to the trembling star ;
The one at my feet, the other so high,
O wonderful world to soul and *eye* !

We list to the music when tempest roars,
Or song of the wave-beat on the shores ;
And the birds sing sweet, tho' there's none to hear,
O wonderful world to soul and *ear* !

And the sweet perfumes that are so intense,
That are shed we scarce know how nor whence,
Recalling more than the tongue may tell,
O wonderful world to soul and *smell* !

And the silky softness of bud and leaf,
Fine veinings set in such sweet relief
That scarce can the finger detect so much,
O wonderful world to soul and *touch* !

And the fruits that sweet in the garden grow,
And the grapes and the lemons that softly glow
In the South, with the oranges also graced,
O wonderful world to soul and *taste* !

And ever and ever the ceaseless motion—
The waves of the flowers and the waves of the ocean,
The fine vibrations of stars to the earth,
The wonderful stirrings that bring to birth.

O wonderful world ! there is no pause
In the ceaseless motions that make thy laws,
Which the wiser men ever strive to find,
O wonderful world to soul and *mind* !

The silvery brooks down the hillsides flow,
The rivers rush to the sea below ;
The clouds they float and make the rain
That falls so sweetly on the plain.

And the winds they blow and we see them not,
But they bring the cold or they bring the hot ;
From far across the lands they sweep,
And they do their work on the ocean deep.

And they carry the salt on their wings to meet
The needs of man and make all things sweet,
For salt has the savour of life for man
And beast, for such is the good God's plan.

And the mountains lift their heads on high,
But o'er their heads the wild birds fly,
And the showers that fall on the hilltops bare
Descend in the rills to the valleys fair.

And all is green if they pass that way,
And the lovely trees, that bend and sway,
Are like harps to the wind as he doth go
Telling all the world, God made them so.

And the moon looks down thro' the cloudy space,
And the tides flow on in their steady race,
And the ocean eats away the rocks
Where the wild birds gather in countless flocks.

And all goes on in its ceaseless flow,
O world, because God made you so ;
And men—and children too—should kneel
And thank God that He made them feel

The wondrous beauty of flower and star,
For because of this they His children are,
And more than all that the rest can be—
Sun, moon or star, or flower or tree!

XVIII.

JANE'S DOVES.

JANE has tender pets that come
To her feet whene'er she calls—
Lovely doves that love the sun,
And love her tho' the shadow falls.

Oft at early morn they wait
For her step by walk or stile,
And coo around her as they run
To greet the favour of her smile.

Jane was ill : the doves were sad,
And drooped, and did not preen their wings ;
When Jane came out it made them glad ;
They seemed to say delightful things.

Although they had no tongue to speak,
They found the voice that love demands ;
They flew about her head and neck,
And perched upon her very hands.

Their feathers sweetly shone anew,
With burnished colours softly wrought
And many-hued ; and who can tell
How beauty grows from loving thought

In beast as well as man, to give
A promise of the time to come,
When love shall move in all that live
And animals no more be dumb.

XIX.

DARLING DOLLY'S HOUSE.

DARLING DOLLY'S house shall be
 High as lofty apple-tree ;
 It shall have a floor inlaid
 Of the sweetest light and shade.
 It shall have for pictures fair
 Fancies that are rich and rare ;
 It shall have a golden roof
 And tapestry with stars for woof.
 And it shall have a dome of blue
 With the moonlight stealing thro' ;
 And stately pillars straight as firs
 Bending to each wind that stirs.
 And her drink shall be of dew,
 Bubbling up from fountains new
 In the house, thro' golden sand,
 Whereon Dolly's feet shall stand.

**Darling Dolly's friends shall come,
 With music of the wild bees' hum,
 The swallows' twitter, linnets' song—
 A music that shall make her strong.
 And her talk they all shall know,
 And at her bidding come and go :
 She shall be a Queen of Hearts
 To know the secret of such arts.
 And she shall never fear to see
 The creatures that make children flee ;
 She shall have a fair command
 And rule, with gladness, o'er the land.
 Darling Dolly's house shall be
 High as lofty apple-tree ;
 It shall have a floor inlaid
 Of the sweetest light and shade.**

[*Good Words.*]

XX.

MY CANARY.

I HAVE a sweet canary :
He's only five months old,
As sprightly as a fairy—
His tricks are manifold.

He loves to pull a piece of string
For hours about his cage :
He frays its ends like anything,
And makes pretence to wage

A war with something living
That he would punish well
For misdeed, or for giving
Offence he would repel.

He dips into his drinking glass
His little head, and showers
The water round—to such a pass—
He's hardly dry for hours.

And when I gently scold him—
Oh, but his pretty eye
Melts me, as I behold him
So pert and clean and sly.

My fairy just begins to sing
And show a varied note ;
I do believe he's found a spring
Of music in his throat.

His little eye is dark and bright ;
He early goes to bed ;
But up with early morning light
And waiting to be fed.

He seems so glad to see me,
And bids me come anear;
And hops about with merry glee—
Then stops, to peep and peer,

With eye aslant and shining,
So very dark and clear—
His little head inclining,
Without a hint of fear;

And takes the sugar from my mouth—
Oh, is he not a dear?—
My pretty sweet canary
That knows no hint of fear.

And when I bring him groundsel
Or grass with seed, so grand,

**Oh, from afar he's sharp to tell
I've treasure in my hand.**

With "tweet-a-tweet" he views it,
And hops and flirts his tail,
And tells me he can use it;
And soon his *tweets* prevail.

I love my sweet canary—
He's only five months old,
And sprightly as a fairy—
His tricks are manifold.

XXI.

LITTLE BABY.

LITTLE baby's soft blue eye
Is like a bit from out the sky :
Out the sky when all is fair,
And scent of roses fills the air.
If he cries 'tis like the rain
That takes the beauty from the plain.
Little baby's brow is white ;
Little baby's smile is bright.
Little baby's hair is fine,
Golden, like the sweet sunshine.
Little baby's laugh is clear,
Gurgling, like a brooklet near.
Baby's eyes are fairest sky
To the loving mother's eye :
And his hair so silky fine,
Is her cheering soft sunshine :
And his brow like arch of light
Spread by moon on stormy night.
Little baby is a king :
All to him their tribute bring.
His crown is love, his sceptre light :
Little baby rules by right.

[*Good Words.*]

XXII.

KENNY'S CROWN.

(AN INCIDENT IN REAL LIFE.)

IN the little ward of an hospital lay
Two sufferers weary for light of day.
For sleep was a stranger thro' their pain,
And to comfort each other they were fain.
They recalled the scenes in which they had moved
Or anecdotes of the friends they loved.
And, after a pause, the younger said :
"You saw the portrait at my bed-head ?
It oft brings back to me as I lie
The happy, happy days gone by.
'Tis a likeness of Kenny, the soldier tall,
Who comes on Sundays, and cheers us all.
The portrait was taken years ago
When he was a boy of twelve or so.
I was his older sister and guide,
And mothered him after dear mother died.
He was just as brave and generous then
As now when he marches at head of his men.
For Kenny is Sergeant-Major, and won
His stripes in the wild Afghanistan.
And still he is meek and kind and true
As when a boy, and I'll tell to you
Of Kenny's crown, which he would not break,
But kept it, as promised, for mother's sake :
That crown he treasured above all toys,
And the things that are most in vogue with boys.

But I remember a neighbour lay
In sickness, her husband far away :
Her children ragged, with silent ways—
Ah, folks who had once seen better days !
And Kenny would often a message run
For 'the lady,' after his tasks were done.
And one day he came and he says, says he,
'I wish you would make a cake for me !'
I said, 'That I will, when this work is done
And the money in, and a handsome one.'
And he said, 'I will do as much for you,
Dear Sis, unless I should fail to do
What I mean to do when a few years more
Will enable me to join the corps.'
I shook my head : I did not incline
To hear him talk of the soldiering line.

* * * * *

So the cake was made, and for tea set down,
And much he admired it, and most its crown.
'Twas of orange peel, so neatly placed,
And, round, by circles of caraway graced.
But when I made to cut him a slice,
He said, 'Oh, don't ; it is much too nice :
We will leave it over, and then we'll see
If time will improve it for you and me !'
And later, when on my bed I lay,
I heard him stir in unwonted way :
I heard him open and shut the door,
Steal round the corner, and nothing more.
I wondered what could have taken him out,
But of Kenny's goodness I ne'er had doubt.

When morning came, and our breakfast shared,
went to see how our neighbours fared.

And there in delight I saw them stand—
The youngsters with pieces of cake in their hand ;

While the mother sick looked up, and smiled
As if by a happy thought beguiled ;

And pain were conquered since she had seen
Some sight not given to mortal een.

And they told, with looks 'twixt smiles and tears,
How a stranger late last night appears,

Muffled up as from cold, and he handed in
A parcel for Mrs. Jocelyn.

And when 'twas opened so fine a cake—
So fine they had hardly the heart to break !

And when at length they cut it down
They found in its centre a silver crown—

Slipped neatly under the orange peel—
Oh, who for them could so kindly feel ?

' 'Twas an angel, ma,' said the youngest child :
I knew 'twas Kenny, but only smiled.

For an angel's act you will set it down ;
And our Kenny still has his silver crown—

Oh, has he not in the thought that led
Him to give to others such gifts instead

Of keeping and hoarding for self alone
What will not bide as the days pass on ? ”

And just that moment on faces thin
But radiant, the rays of the sun looked in.

XXIII.

THE APPLE.

OFT comes to me, on memory's train,
A picture fair from a time of pain ;
When I, a weak child, wistful lay,
Thinking of much in a dreamy way.
My brother, bright of spirit, fair,
Came dancing in, with a joyous air ;
And from his pocket an offering drew
Freshly bright, as a flower with dew :
An apple, ruddy-red and fair,
Which, with joy, he handed mother there.
" Take, dear mama ; I have kept for you
This apple sweetly fair of hue."
My wistful eyes caught the colour bright ;
It seemed to fill all my sense of sight.
I longed to handle and touch and kiss
Just such a cool sweet thing as this.
'Twas sight not taste it awakened so :
For I was so very weak and low.
My mother saw how I looked, and knew
My eye was pleased with the apple's hue.
And she said, " Dear Frank, 'twas good to bring
For your mother fond this offering.
But 'twill please and gladden me far more,
If you will give it to sister Flor.

She 'is weak and ill, and cannot go
To see the folks outside, you know.
And that will please her and cool her hand,
Tho' she may not eat it, you understand."
Came a look of regret on his bright young face;
Then came a tear, and then a trace
Of a smile, and he turned and kissed me there:
"To both I'll have given my apple fair;
And that is the best that could ever be,
For it will be shared by all us three."
And my mother kissed both him and me;
And thus it remains in my memory.
And this is love's best way, you see,
To make one apple into three;
And leave on the memory a lasting trace
As a sign of the power of a true heart's grace.

XXIV.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

(A TRUE INCIDENT OF SCOTTISH LIFE.)

GOOD Farmer Miller had gone to see
An old friend distant two miles or threc.

He knew the way as well as you know
Your garden where daily rounds you go ;

And every part of it told him tales
Of days gone by—even gates and pales—

The days when young, and light of heart
He had ranged in joy and taken his part

In games and larks, as young folks will,
And had danced in a ring on yonder hill :

And when he went of nights to woo
When the moonlight made its pictures true.

And he had his colley for guard and friend,
Who loved his master, you may depend.

He had done his business and made for home :
It was not his way far afield to roam.

He took the short-cuts by field and hedge,
And meadow and by the brooklet's edge.

But sudden the cold made him weak, and fain
To rest by a hedge till well again.

And he fell unconscious, and down he sank
Prostrate upon the grassy bank.

And his faithful colley kept close guard,
And sometimes ran if a sound he heard,

Hoping that some of the folks at home,
To help his master would soon, soon come.
But instead came a stranger he did not know,
Who might indeed be his master's foe.
And the stranger went, and came again
With other strangers in his train.
But the dog's watch o'er the man was such
That he would not allow that they should touch.
They beat him, stoned him, till he cried,
But he would not stir from his master's side.
And—at last—what other could they do?—
They would shoot the dog that had proved so true—
To save the man that the dog did love
The dog would have died, as his acts did prove.
The guns were levelled, but, oh, surprise!
The farmer faintly opens his eyes.

And soon he sees how affairs had gone,
And whispers the dog to let them alone :
They were kind and friendly and meant no ill ;
And the good dog yields to his master's will.
And the picture I see in my fancy's eye
Is the little party passing by,
Bearing a form as best they may,
And the good dog following on the way
A step behind, with a thoughtful air,
As if he still had cause for care,
And needs must watch o'er his master true :
I would prize such a dog ; ah, would not you ?

XXV.

THE RABBIT AND THE TEAL.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

IN friendship close and fair
Once lived a happy pair :
A Rabbit and a Teal
That sought each other's weal.
On the border of a park, with a streamlet by its side,
The Rabbit had its burrow, and at morn and even-
tide
The friends full often met, choosing now the water's
edge,
Or finding sheltered corner 'mid the rustling foliage.
Then, taking their repose, they would talk of many
things,
Repeating what they loved the most, which deepest
pleasure brings.
All things they held in common : love and sorrow,
joy and pain
They shared, and by the sharing, each a double joy
did gain.
Such the life they lived till one day—oh, day of
sorrow dire !
When the Rabbit came to dinner at the Teal's express
desire,
He found the chamber empty, and in agony he cried,
But to his dolorous callings all answer was denied.

Completely stunned with fright,
He was a piteous sight,
Running here and there, and turning oftentimes
amid the reeds ;
It might have seemed he wholly lacked a method in
his deeds.
And when he came to water's edge, he would have
plunged in,
If with strength and life he could have hoped the
other shore to win,
And find his friend ; but suddenly, with impulse
sharp, he ran
Along the marshy water's edge, each wonted nook
to scan.
" O dear companion sister," he fervently appealed,
" I would that I might see thee, tho' then my eyes
were sealed ;
**Far rather I would die than know that thou art
suffering now.**
I tremble sadly for thy fate : a pain is in my brow."

At last, in all its grace,
Rose the Chateau of the place,
Before him as he stood
In melancholy mood,
Not knowing how to turn, or what pathway to
prefer,
As he found himself in midst of a beautiful parterre.
Looking round him very wary,
He espied an aviary,
Where a thousand birds disported o'er a basin bright
and gay,
And, love imparting courage, to the grating he made
way.

He looked and recognised—
Oh, the friendship that he prized!—
His sister Teal, and suddenly he raised a cry of joy,
But better methods also he was ready to employ :
His front feet setting vigorously to earth without
delay,
To save his friend by hollowing out a subterranean
way.
Soon by this path he entered without a scratch or
scar,
Like to a skilful miner taking armed place of war.
The birds, all frightened, pressed and flew
To see a face so strange and new !
But soon the Teal was led to the entrance of the
way,
And by help of careful feeling was quickly led
to day,
And to share all freedom's treasure.
He was like to die for pleasure!
What a moment for the friends!
Who, deeming all was safe, to themselves would make
amends
For the grief that both had known
In a confab all alone.
But angry was the master when he became aware
Of the sad destruction worked upon his aviary fair :
He cried, " My guns and ferrets! have them ready
quick and come,"
And dogs and keepers marchèd out as if to tuck of
drum ;
The terriers following after thro' the brushwood
filled the train,
And all the rabbits that appeared did die in throes
of pain.

That day the banks of Styx by their manes were
bordered thick,
But the master of the massacre was very far from
sick,
And fixed to-morrow morning afresh the war to wage
Against the wretched rabbits, and finish the carnage!
Our Rabbit, trembling, waited all thro' the weary
while,
Cowering 'mid the thick-set reeds close by his friend
the Teal,
Imploping that his sister should fly to farther shore
Should he be stricken mortally and wounded her
before.
"I will not leave thee ever," said the faithful sister
Teal,
"Death only shall divide us; my words with life I'll
seal!

**Ah, if thou wert but able to cross the stream; but,
stay!**

I think that I am equal to find for thee a way."

She quickly left. The Rabbit stood, more wildly
beat his breast;

The Teal returned shortly, dragging after her a nest;
With the stems of reeds made stronger for the work
it had to do,

Pierced and pressed by feet and beak, rough woven
thro' and thro':

A little boat in state,
To support a heavy weight;

And to the tiny vessel a rope of rush she bound,
For a cable thus to drag it thro' the water safe and
sound.

And when the little boat
By the Teal was set afloat,

The Rabbit entered gently, and sat him down with
ease,
Whilst before him swam the Teal, drawing on by
slow degrees,
And directing very skilfully the skiff to him so dear.
At last they crost, and, landing, threw off all thoughts
of fear ;
And they found at little distance a much-desired
retreat,
Where happily they dwelt for years alike in cold
and heat ;
And the joys of life were doubled, thro' the sorrows
undergone,
For in the deepest heart and soul the friends were
truly one.
[*Good Words.*]

XXVI.

AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

(July 23-26, 1891.)

'T WAS here the boy, Will Shakespeare, walked,
Amid his comrades gay;
And often as they went they talked
And laughed upon the way.

Look at that house—peaked windows three,
And oak-beams shining dark
From out the plaster; there, you see,
Was Shakespeare's birthplace—hark!—

**You almost hear his mother cry
From out that open door—**

**“Dear Will, come back; you know that I
Have called you oft before.”**

For very fond of play was he—
A healthy boy, and glad
Out in the sunny air to be,
And run about like mad.

Now step inside; and there you'll see
The chimney-corner wide,
Where oft he sat and joked in glee,
Or read at eventide.

And, up above, the very place
Where first he saw the light;—
Great Shakespeare with his baby-face—
We almost see the sight!—

As there we stand, and think, and think,
And curious glances cast,
Till everything becomes a link
To bind us to the past.

And, out beyond, the garden fair
Where oft he'd races run ;
And in behind that oak-tree there
It may be hid in fun.

We walk the way he often went—
Soon to his school we come :
Still as it was when he down bent
O'er copybook or sum.

We pass by New Place : fair and fine
The grounds on which he'd look,
When in his study he'd recline,
Or lift his head from book.

See there now, on the water-side,
The church to which he went ;
And there at morn or eventide
His knees in prayer he bent,
Beside his mother, sisters dear ;
His father in his place :
And there the font where water clear
Was sprinkled on his face.

And there his body rests in peace :
His effigy on wall :
The golden sunbeams seldom cease
To stream upon them all.

The river, winding, flows at ease
With pollards on its banks ;
And farther off are rows of trees,
Like soldiers in their ranks.

All tell of Shakespeare, how that here
He passed his youthful prime,
And ever held the place right dear ;
And wearied for the time
When Fortune should so sweetly smile,
That, free from London's chain,
With all its fret and weary toil,
He might come *home* again—
To spend his later years beside
His wife and children fair,
In youthful haunts, by Avon's side,
And breathe his native air,
Why is it men from every clime
Do journey still to see
These places hoary now with time,
And gaze in ecstasy ?

It is because by his great art

Great plays he made that move ;
Laid bare the workings of the heart—
Its hate, its faith, its love.

And one day, when you see the Queen
Sleep-walk in her remorse ;
Or gallant Romeo stoop, and lean,
Then fall by Juliet's corse ;

See Rosalind the game that won
In Arden ; or behold
Great Egypt's Queen come sailing on
In tissue cloth-of-gold—

In passion for her Antony,
Brave e'en the aspicks' bite ;
Without him pleasure might not be
Nor in her throne delight ;

Or see the Moor for jealousy
Sweet Desdemona kill ;
And throw so sweet a pearl away
To work Iago's will ;

Or Hamlet brooding o'er his woe,
Helpless the case to mend ;
And poor Ophelia wandering go,
To make so sad an end ;

Or Lear led, homeless, to the wild—
A broken King, and bare
Of love and worship, while the child
He banned, would seek him there ;

Or Julius Cæsar fall below
The stabs of friends untrue :
Brutus and Cassius, that did go
Old Rome nigh to undo :

See these and more, in which are found
Such knowledge, wisdom, art,—
Such power of insight, humour sound,
Such pathos of the heart !—

Ah, then you'll know why thousands haste
From countries far away,
To see the spots where Shakespeare paced,
And dreamt his days away !

XXVII.

SULTAN SOLIMAN AND THE BIRDS.

GREAT Sultan Soliman sat at his ease
In his chair of state, with a book on his knees,
At the which he read, tho' at times he would start
As if, spite his book, came a throb to his heart ;
For not long before of his wives the most true,
Adijah the lovely, had bade him adieu,
And vanished away, leaving life cold and bare
To the Sultan supreme, who now turned in despair
From the Harem to dote on the image refined
That evermore rose, soft and clear, to his mind.
On the housetop he'd sit, as the sun sinking low
Made a glory, and wonder which way she must go
To the heaven that is promised the faithful and brave
By Mahommed the Prophet to king and to slave,
Who obeyed his behests, and gave reverence due
To his statutes in every detail that they knew :

And oft, as he saw the fair doves wing their way
O'er the palace, with uttermost longing, he'd say—
"Oh would that my soul were a dove that could fly,
I would follow Adijah thro' cloud and thro' sky
To the heaven the Prophet provides for the true
Sons of Islam, with joys and delights ever new—
That to page of the Koran give glory and light—
The promises making it starlike and bright."

And now as the Sultan the first time essays
To sit in the state-chair wherever the rays
Of the diamonds and rubies forever proclaim
The Ottoman's glory, the Sultan's proud fame,
He motioned his servants to leave him awhile,
As he with the Koran the hours would beguile.

And there, as he sat, and from words that he read
His mind oft would stray to Adijah the dead,
On a sudden it seemed as if wind stirred and died,
Then a wafting of wings rose on every side ;
He looked up and saw such a company fair
As never before had a Sultan seen there :
For birds of all colours and sizes did crowd,
And waver and mix like a soft floating cloud.
As he looked in his wonder, they settled them fair,
Huddling close in all corners, and e'en on his chair
By his side perched the Dove, who was charged by the
rest
To present their good spokesman, the Lark, with his
crest ;
Who then, stepping forward, made bow, cleared his
throat,
And uttered these words in mellifluous note :—

“O King, we have come to appeal to your grace
That you help us to right in our pitiful case :
For our sleep it is broken, our music less sweet—
Whether heard in the morn or in afternoon's heat—
Because of the Nightingale's notes in the night,
That awake us in dark or in silver moonlight.
And our souls they are vexed by the thrill and the pain
That he always awakes by his tender refrain ;
His longing and yearning that conquer us so,
That our singing, alas ! is fulfilled of his woe ;
And we no more are cheerful and bright as of yore,
And the day is made sad by his song evermore :
For the echo doth haunt us and spoil our true song,
And contentment no longer to us doth belong !
We do not deny that his song is most sweet ;
But we ask if for one voice at night it is meet

All songsters of day suffer loss and such pain
For the Nightingale's lonely and plaintive refrain,
Which few ever hear ; and therefore we pray
Of your grace, to make end of the Nightingale's lay."

Like a sweet Summer wind in the leaves there now
went

O'er this audience a soft-swelling wave of assent :
And the Crow that, by some strangest accident, stood
Next in line to the Lark, caw-cawed " Very good ! "
As tho' he was versed in the merits of song
Or to him all the virtues of music belong !
And his cry raised a flutter of softened surprise,
Which caused the high Sultan to lift up his eyes,
While the Sparrows and Wagtails refrained not their
feat,

But accorded their vote with a noisy " tweet, tweet " ;
And the Finches and Thrushes that silently stood
Hung their heads as if wounded with conduct so rude.

**Then at call of the Sultan the Nightingale came
To answer the charges of wrong and of blame :
His feathers were ruffled ; he looked so subdued—
The plainest of birds in the coppice or wood.**

**" O Sultan magnificent," Bulbul began,
" It is woeful for me such defences to plan :
My genius is not for debate or discourse,
And for eloquent phrase I must fail of resource :
I can only in words very simple and plain
Tell your highness what giveth the soul to my strain ;
And if I disturb my good friends with my lay
In the nighttime, your kingship will honestly say
Whether I in this matter alone am to blame,
Since another commands all the powers of my frame :**

'Tis the Rose that at even its sweetness unseals—
Its ardour of passion in perfume reveals,—
It speaks to my soul in a rapture of pain,
That I sing but of this, and I cannot refrain :
It impels me—the secret of love doth me fill,—
I am void if offence, for I purpose no ill.
And if the birds waken, and lose their soft sleep,
It must add to their range that with me they can weep ;
And if, in the nighttime, they yearn with that pain
They have only to wait for a still deeper strain ;
For in discords of pain, and regret, and remorse
All harmony fashioned of soul has its source :
And the law of all song is that passion must move
Fuller notes till they rise to the rapture of love :
And if dumb you doom me for other birds' rest,
The silence will still all the life in my breast ;
And the night were no longer the sweet time of love,
And the Rose it might die with no song to approve.
O Sultan magnificent, if *you* have felt
The passion of love, and in memory have dwelt
On the bliss of embraces that no word may name,
Then you can defend me, and shield me from blame !”

The Sultan arose, and he stretched out his hand,
With a gesture at once very lofty and bland :
His dark eyes were moist—sorrow shaded their fire,
And thus did he speak to the listening quire :—

“ Friends the Birds ! I do wish I could grant your
request

And ensure you the bliss of unbroken nights' rest :
But in cases like this—why—a judge must be true,
And never accept a mere one-sided view :
He must rise to the law of the life that's at stake,
And a judgment in loftiest equity make:

But when morning pale,
Like a silver sail,
Shakes out her robe of pearl,
I hail her with song,
That is sweet and strong,
As my giant sails I unfurl.

With a burr and a whir,
In a ceaseless stir,
I grind for beast and man ;
Be he rich or poor,
None could do more,
For I aye do all I can.

[*Good Words.*]

XXIX.

A KINDLY DEED

I.

A KINDLY deed
Is a little seed,
That groweth all unseen ;
And lo, when none
Do look thereon,
Anew it springeth green

II.

A friendly look
Is a better book
For precept, than you'll find
'Mong the sages wise
Or the libraries,
With their priceless wealth of mind.

III.

The little dole
Of a humble soul,
In all sincerity given,
Is like the wings
Of the lark, as it springs,
Singing clear, to the gate of heaven.
[*Good Words.*]

XXX.

THE FIRST VOYAGE.

I.

OH, trim and gay was the gallant craft,
A flower at her main masthead ;
And fair she looked both fore and aft,
As o'er the bar she sped !
Her sails were white to the morning ray,
And shimmered with magic sheen ;
Oh, where is the wind would bar her way—
Our nimble Ocean Queen ?

II.

All safe she's touched the storied land
That yields the spice and the pearl :
The captain has gems for his good wife's hand,
And silken robes for his girl ;
The mate has chosen the brightest hues,
To deck his waiting bride ;
And the cabin-boy wears his heart-dues,
For safety close at his side.

III.

So near to home, they can see the lights,
Like stars, o'er the glimmering town.
Busy are all "putting things to rights,"
But, oh, that the wind were down !
The sails are furled, for the rocky shore
The captain knows full well ;
To venture a stitch of canvas more
Might end as none dare tell.

IV.

There's a sudden gale !—Ah ! it dashes
The ship near the cliffs they knew ;
They can see by the lightning-flashes
A life-boat labouring thro'.
Nobly she strains amid the foam,
But they see not morning-tide :
Only one gift of all comes home
On the cabin-boy's cold side.
[*Good Words.*

XXXI.

SONG FOR A SCHOOL-TREAT.

O H, sweet are the skies, and the fields all around
In the yellow of harvest are dressed ;
The flowerets are springing from out the soft ground,
And the birds are up singing their best.

'Tis a chorus they bring to *our* singing and glee
Who again for our school-treat are here,
With our teachers and friends, who are come out to
see,
And to join in our feasting and cheer.

When races are run or round Maypole we dance,
May we ever feel thankfulness rise—
That the sunshine without joins the sunshiny glance
In the friendly and welcoming eyes !—

That the flowers of the field and the flowers of the
heart
Are united to brighten and cheer,
For the one day on which all alike take their part
To make happy and banish all fear.

'Tis a day that we wish for as months pass away,
A day we look back to with joy :
May we honestly try to improve every day,
And our powers for good objects employ—

That we ever may feel we have worked for the day
Of the school-treat with all its nice fun ;
And that no *tug-of-war* or unauthorised play
Make us wish that our deeds were undone.

XXXII.

A MUSIC LESSON.

I.

FINGERS on the holes, Johnny,
Fairly in a raw :
Lift this and then that,
And blaw, blaw, blaw !
That's hoo to play, Johnny,
On the pipes sae shrill :
Never was the piper yet
But needit a' his skill.

II.

And lang and sair he tried it, tae,
Afore he wan the knack
O' making bag and pipe gie
His verra yearnin's back.
The echo tae his heart-strings
Frae sic a thing to come ;
Oh, is it no a wonder—
Like a voice frae out the dumb ?

III.

Tak' tentie, noo, my Johnny lad,
Ye maunna hurry thro'—
Tak' time and try it ower again—
Sic a blast ye blew !

It's no aane by blawing strang,
 But eke by blawing true,
 That ye can mak' the music
 To thim' folk thro' and thro'.

IV.

The wark folk and the learnin',
 'Tis them that mak's the din;
 But for the finished pipers
 They count it as a sin:
 And maybe it's the verra same
 A' the warld thro'—
 The learners the verra ones
 That mak' the most ado!

V.

Ye ken the Scotchrons taunt us—
 I sayna they're unfair—
 About oor squallin' music,
 And their taunts hae hurt me sair;
 But if they'd heard a piper true
 At night come ower the hill,
 Playin' up a pibroch
 Upon the wind sae still:

VI.

Risin' noo, and fallin' noo,
 And floatin' on the air,
 The sounds come saftly on ye
 Amang ere ye're aware,
 And wind themselves about the heart,
 That hasna yet forgot
 The witchery o' love and joy
 Within some lanely spot:—

VII.

I'm sure they wadna taunt us sae,
Nor say the bagpipe's wild,
Nor speak o' screachin' noises
Enuch to deave a child :
They would say the bagpipe only
Is the voice of hill and glen ;
And would listen to it sorrowing,
Within the haunts of men.

VIII.

Fingers on the holes, Johnny,
Fairly in a raw :
Lift this and then that,
And blaw, blaw, blaw !
That's hoo to play, Johnny,
On the pipes sae shrill :
Never was the piper yet
But needit a' his skill.
[*Good Words.*]









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